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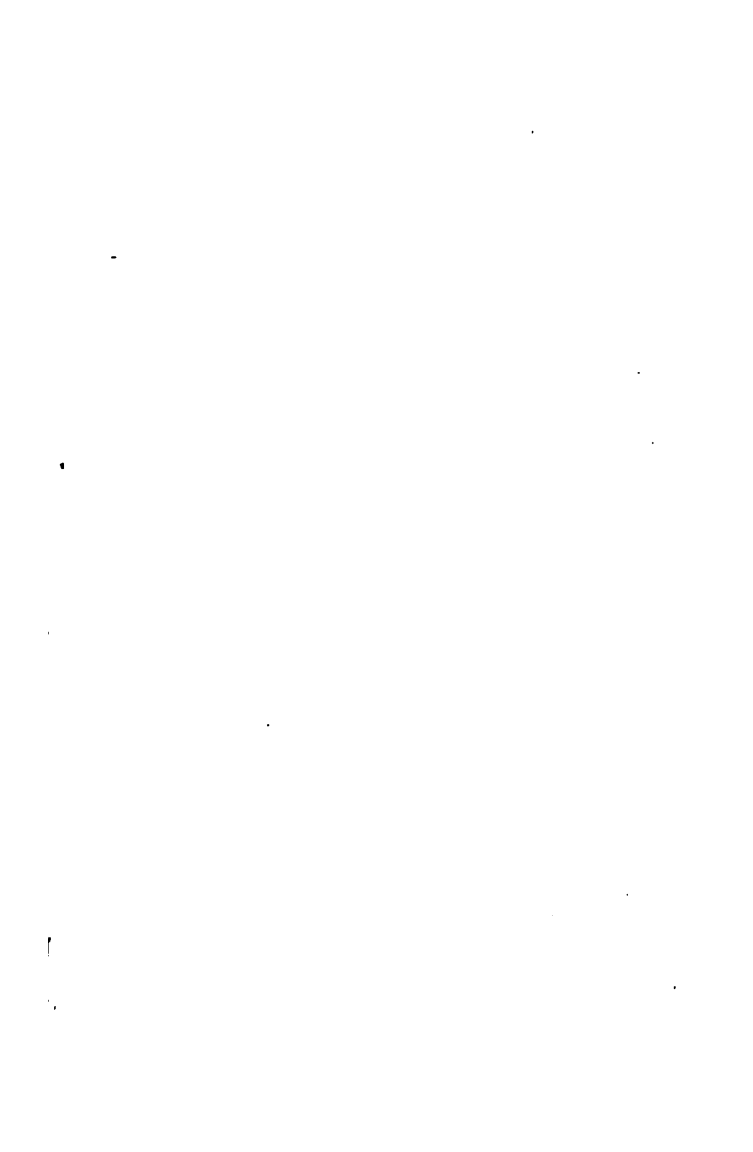
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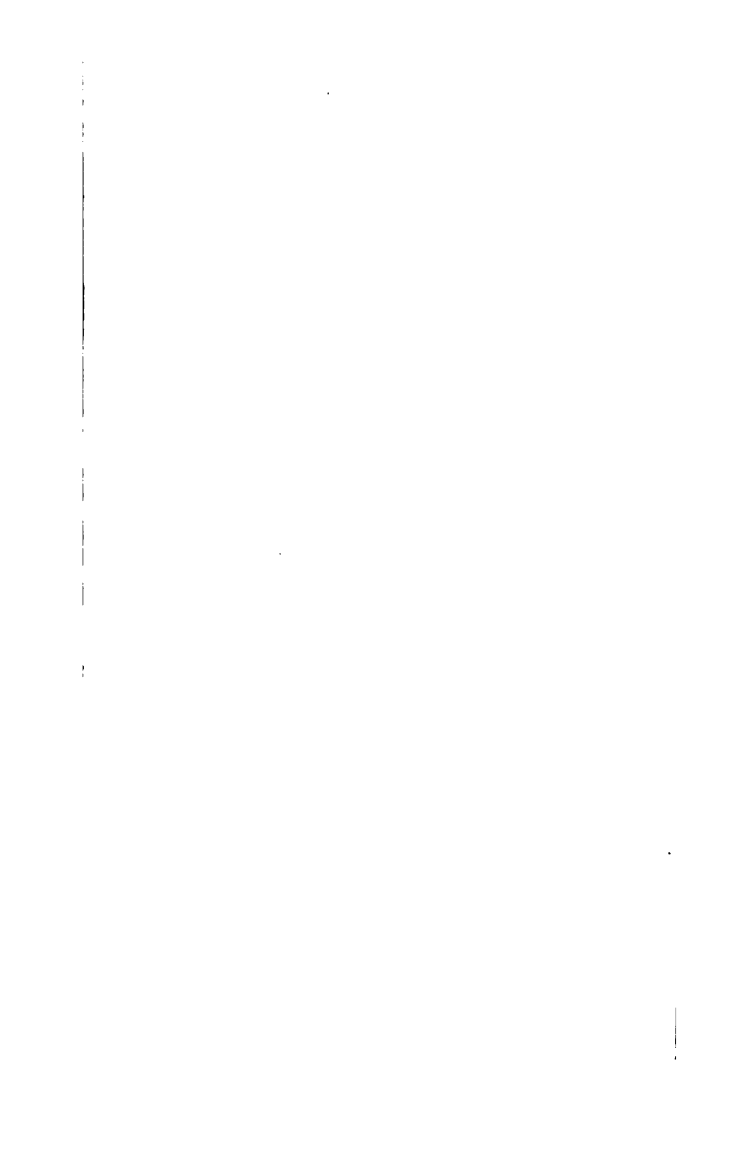
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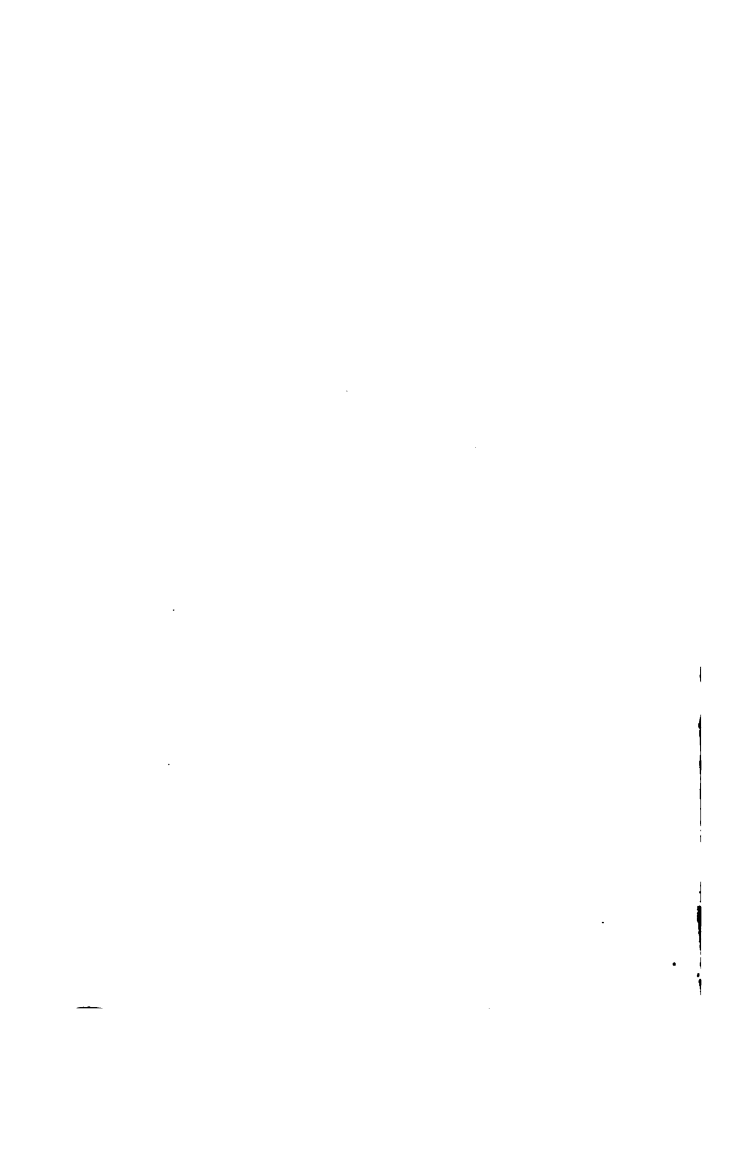
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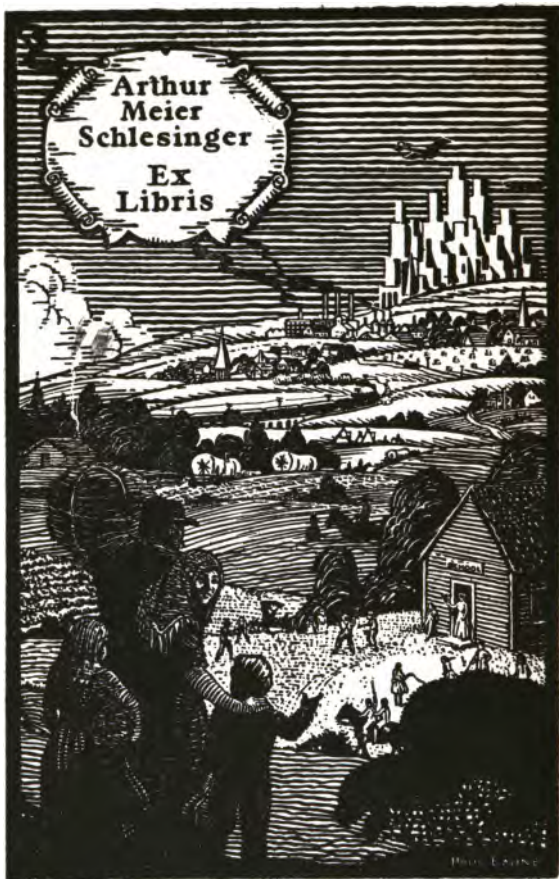


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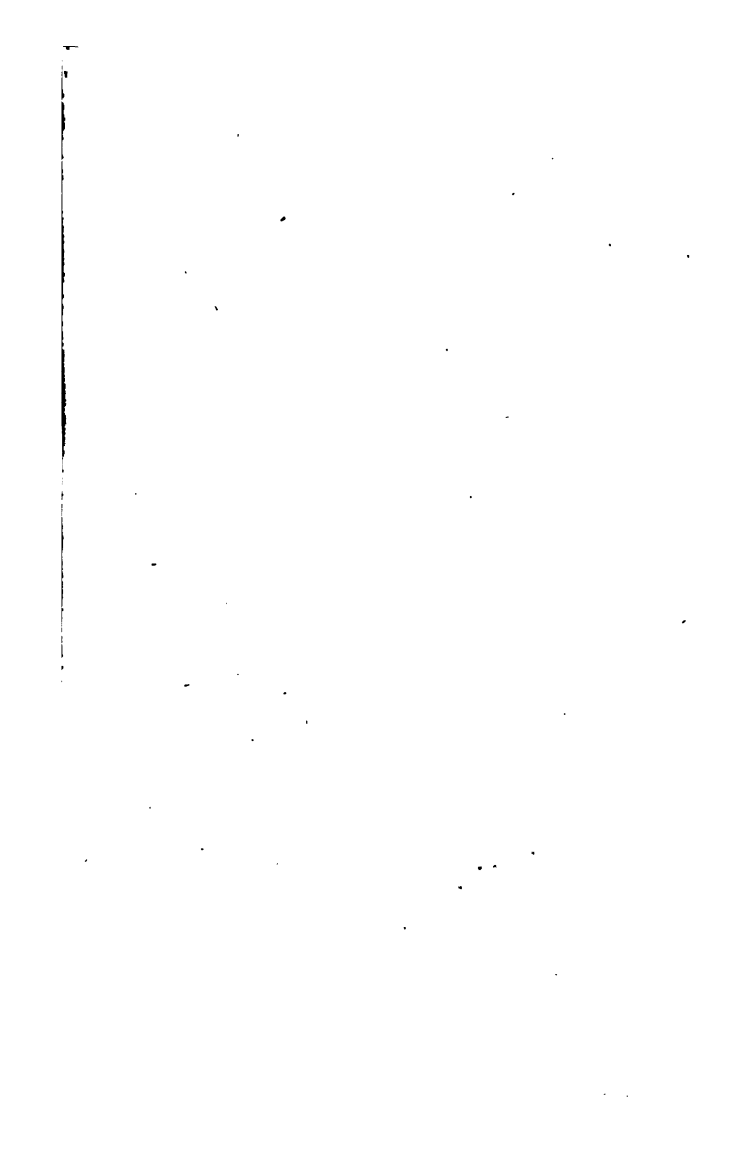
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PAUL E. LANGE



LETTERS
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TO
—
YOUNG LADIES..
— —

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BY MRS. L. H. SIGOURNEY.
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"Every sort of useful knowledge should be imparted to the young, not merely for its own sake, but also for the sake of its subserviency to higher things."
MRS. HANNAH MORE.

SECOND EDITION.

Hartford.
WILLIAM WATSON.
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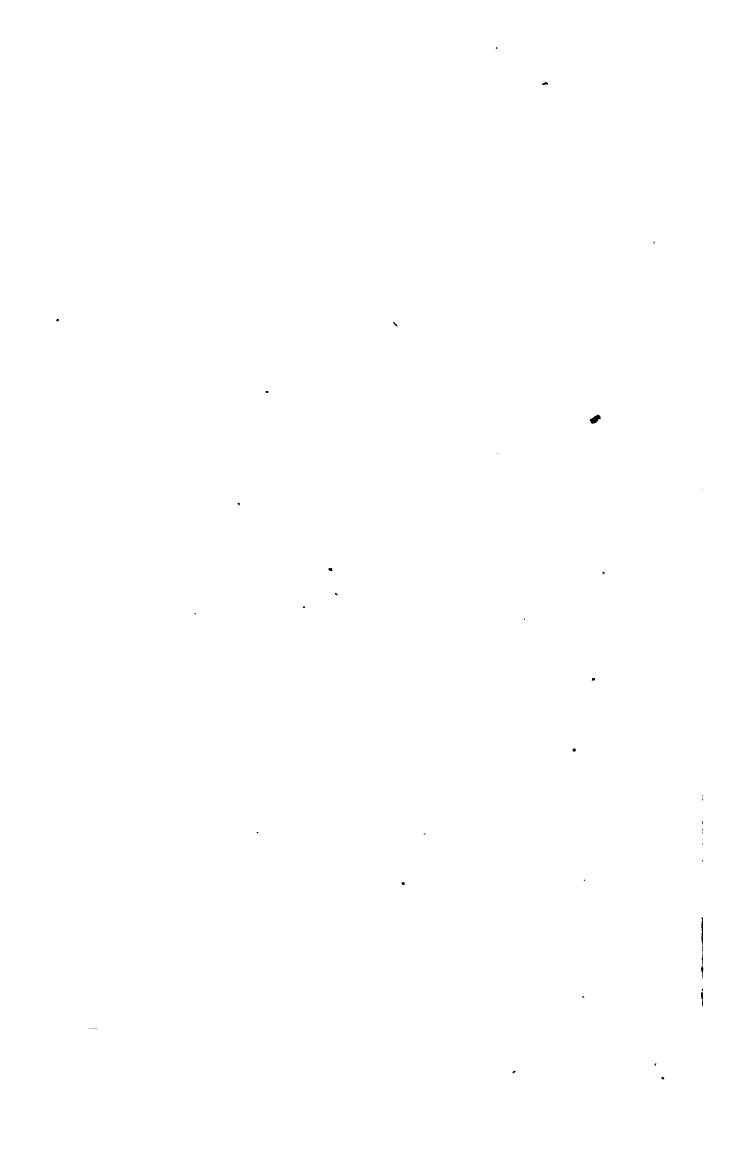
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PREFACE.

I HAVE been requested to address a few thoughts to the youth of my own sex, on subjects of simple nature, and serious concern. The employment has been pleasant, for their interests are dear to me; and several years devoted to their instruction, have unfolded more fully their claims to regard, and the influence they might exercise in society. Should a single heart in "life's sweet blossoming season," derive from this little volume, aid, guidance, or consolation, tenfold satisfaction will be added to the pleasure with which it has been composed.

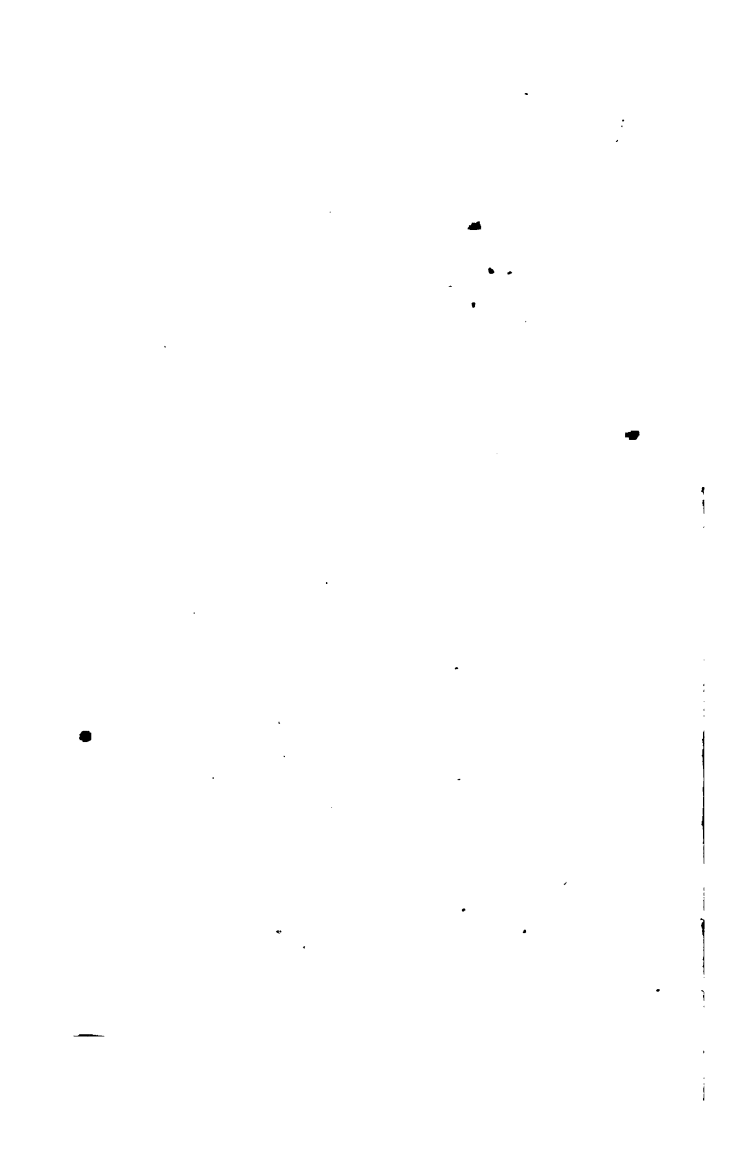
L. H. S.

Hartford, Conn. July, 1835.



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LETTER I.

ON THE IMPROVEMENT OF TIME.

As nothing truly valuable, my dear young friends, can be attained without industry, so there can be no persevering industry, without a sense of the value of time. Youth would be too happy, might it add to its own beauty and felicity, the wisdom of riper years. Were it possible for it to realize the worth of time, as life's receding hours will reveal it, how rapidly would it press on towards perfection. It is too often the case, that the period allotted to education, is but imperfectly appreciated, till it approaches its close, or has actually departed. Then, its recollections are mingled with regret or repentance; for experience is more frequently the fruit of our own mistakes and losses, than the result of the admonitions and counsels of others.

Still, the young are sometimes found sedulously regarding the flight of time, and zealously marking it with mental and moral excellence. Illustrating in their practice, the aspiration of

the Psalmist, they learn "to number their days, that they may apply their hearts unto wisdom."

Suffer me, then, with the urgency of true friendship, to impress on you the importance of a just estimation of time. Consider how much is to be performed, attained, and conquered, ere you are fitted to discharge the duties which the sphere of woman comprehends. Think of the brevity of life. The most aged have compared it to a span in compass,—and to a shuttle in flight. Compute its bearings upon the bliss or woe of eternity, and remember if mispent, it can never be recalled. Other errors admit of reformation. Lost wealth may be regained, by a course of industry;—the wreck of health, repaired by temperance;—forgotten knowledge, restored by study;—alienated friendship soothed into forgiveness:—even forfeited reputation won back by penitence and virtue. But who ever again looked upon his vanished hours?—recalled his slighted years and stamped them with wisdom?—or effaced from Heaven's record, the fearful blot of a wasted life?

Diligent improvement of time is enforced for the sake of the happiness that it imparts. Indolence is a foe to enjoyment. "There is

nothing among all the cares and burdens of a king," said Lewis XIV. to the prince, his son, "*so laborious as idleness.*" It is a dereliction both of duty and happiness. It is disobedience to the command of our Creator. It frustrates both his bounty and our benefit. While in bondage to it, we never enjoy self-approbation. Rust gathers over the mind, and corrodes its powers. Melancholy weighs down the spirits, and the consciousness of having lived in vain embitters reflection. Whatever establishes a habit of regular industry, in early life, is a blessing. Even those reverses of fortune, which are accounted calamities, sometimes call into action energies, with which the possessor was unacquainted, and lead to higher degrees of respectability and happiness, than affluence in its lassitude and luxury could ever have attained. The waste of time in youth, is a greater loss than at any other period of existence. "The misimprovement of youthful days," says an elegant writer, "is more than the *mere loss of time.* Figure to yourself the loss that the year would sustain were the spring taken away: such a loss do they sustain who trifle in youth."

When there is so much to be done for indi-

vidual improvement, in the formation of correct habits, and preparation for untried duty,—so much for parents and benefactors, to pay even imperfectly the debt of gratitude,—so much for brothers, and sisters, and friends,—so much for the poor, the uneducated, the afflicted,—so much in obedience to Him who hath commanded us to “work out our own salvation with fear and trembling;” how unreasonable is it to do but little, and to do that little carelessly! how sinful to trifle away our time in light amusement, or profitless pursuit! It is no excuse for us, that others waste their days in desultory pleasures, or pass their youth without motive and without improvement. Every one must stand *alone* to give account at last. The example of an associate will not be accepted as a palliation, nor the habit of excuse, however it might have deceived men, justify us before a judge who readeth the intents of the heart.

The successful improvement of time, is aided by order in its distribution. A division of the day into parts, facilitates the successful discharge of its duties. Many of those who have become eminent in science and literature, have adhered to a systematic arrangement of

time. King Alfred, who so remedied the defects of early education, as to gain distinction in the field of intellect, as well as in the annals of royalty, was an example of regularity. He divided the twenty-four hours into three equal portions. One of these periods of eight hours was devoted to the duties of religion, one to repose, recreation and literature, and the other to the cares of his realm. Sir William Jones, who acquired the knowledge of twenty-eight languages, and whose attainments in all that ennobled man were such, that it was pronounced a "happiness to his race that he was born," persevered in a regular allotment of his time to particular occupations, and a scrupulous adherence to the distribution which he had established. Thus his great designs went on without confusion; and so convinced was he of the excellence of daily system, and so humble in the estimation of his native endowments, that to the inquiry how his wonderful attainments in every branch of knowledge had been made, he was accustomed to reply, *only by industry and regular application.*

Though the path of distinction in science and literature may not be the object of our ambition, yet in the sphere allotted to our sex,

order and method are of essential importance. The assigning daily duty to particular hours, as far as may be practicable, helps to ensure its performance. The system must often yield to circumstances, and be subject to interruptions, yet by keeping its general features steadily in view, more will be accomplished, and to better purpose than by desultory effort.

Consider every day, my dear young friends, as a sacred gift from the Author of your being. Divide it between the duties you owe to *Him*, to *yourselves*, and your *fellow creatures*. Remember that you are held responsible at a higher tribunal than that of earth, for the manner in which they are discharged. Keep these three great departments before the eye of the mind. Proportion the day between them, as the promised land was divided by lot among the chosen tribes. Consult those whom it is your duty to obey or to please, respecting the appropriation of hours to employments. Use discretion and kindness in not interfering with the convenience of those around, and then evince decision in not yielding to slight obstacles. When your system is once correctly established, let it be understood that it is not lightly to be set aside. When it must unavoid-

ably yield, make use of it as an exercise of patience and gentleness.

With the first light of the morning say to your waking heart, "behold another day, to be divided between the Giver, your own improvement, and the good of those with whom you are associated." Secure by early rising those hours, when the frame is refreshed by repose, and the mind clear and vigorous with consciousness of renovated existence. Commence your day with devotion, the reading of the Scriptures, and meditation. As far as possible, let these sacred duties be in solitude and secrecy between yourself and your Maker. Raised by his hand from the helplessness of slumber, dependent on it for protection throughout the unknown changes of a day which may be your last on earth, let the young heart pour out its gratitude and hope, as living incense on the breath of the rising-morn.

When the celebrated Boerhaave was inquired of, how he was able to acquire and to perform so much, he answered, it is my morning hour of prayer and meditation that gives me spirit and vigor during the labors of the day." He enjoined this practice on his

friends, as one of the best rules in his power to give, conducive both to health of body, tranquillity of mind, and right conduct under the various allotments of providence. Were it it necessary to multiply arguments, the example of the pious in all ages might be adduced to sanction the practice of hallowing the morning by devotion. The changes of the day, though it open with the smile of hope; are unknown. It may lead to unexpected trial. It may test the firmness of your soul by sudden prosperity. It may open the fountain of tears. It may summon you to that pale assembly, who have no longer any share in the things done under the sun. It will certainly bring you nearer to their narrow house. Take therefore with you a blessing, the solicited guidance of divine grace, the leadings of that pure spirit which can sustain the infirmities of our nature, and "what is dark, illumine; what is low, raise and support."

The second division of the duties of the day regards *yourself*. Much is required of the young to fit themselves for respectability and usefulness in life. Much is required of our sex, in the present state of society, and by the spirit of an age rapidly advancing in improve-

ment. Be true to every just expectation. Regard it as a privilege that much is expected of you. The care of your health, the advance of your mind in knowledge by study and contemplation, dexterity and diligence in the varied circle of domestic employment, attention to such accomplishments as your station may require, the whole field of physical, mental and moral culture, which opens before her who is determined that her husbandry shall not be faithless nor her harvest light, is too wide and diversified to admit of rules being given you by another, except the injunction that as far as is in your power, each portion should have its allotted period.

The third department of daily duty regards our *fellow beings*. To be engrossed wholly by our own pursuits, creates selfishness. It is possible for the intellect to be cultivated at the expense of the heart. Therefore our obligations to those with whom we travel on "time's brief journey," should be clearly defined. This interchange aids in forming habits of disinterested kindness, and in preparing our nature for some of its most delightful affections. The duties which we owe to parents, benefactors, and teachers claim a pre-eminent place in our

regard. Though we may not hope to repay according to what we have received; let us not be deficient in any testimony of gratitude which it is in our power to render.

There is one virtue which I wish to recommend to your attention, my young friends, in which the present age has been pronounced deficient. I mean, *respect to the aged*. To "honor the hoary head, and rise up before the face of the old man," is a command of Jehovah. Those who have borne the burdens of life until strength has failed, in whose bosoms are treasures of experience to which we are strangers, whose virtues are confirmed beyond the fear of change or fluctuation, and who by the short space that divides their ripened piety from its reward, may be literally said to be "but a little lower than the angels," are surely worthy of the veneration of youth. Even when age is seen united with infirmity of purpose, or decay of those organs, through which the mind has been accustomed to act, it is entitled to tenderness from those who must themselves tread the same path of withered and wearied energies, unless they go down to an earlier grave. The aged are soothed by the marked respect of the young,

and the tribute is graceful to those who render it.

Duties to brothers, sisters and companions, culture of social feelings, punctuality in promises, kindness and courtesy to all, open an important and interesting sphere of action. Good offices to the poor, the uneducated, the afflicted, you will also as you have opportunity, comprehend within your social or relative department of duty.

Close the day by the same sacred services with which it commenced. Add also the exercise of self-examination. Compare the performances in each division of duty with the requisitions enforced in the morning. Inquire of the first allotted period, what hast thou done to render the *soul* more acceptable to pure eyes?—of the second, what armor hast thou given the *mind* for life's warfare?—of the third, how hast thou aided the *heart* to advance the happiness of others? Let each hour bring its report. Marshalled under their respective leaders, bid them pass the review of conscience. May it be found that none have slumbered at their post, none broken their ranks, none deserted to the enemy. Something will be gathered from the tablet of the

the careful perusal of books for the attainment of useful knowledge?

7. What period will you allot to the needle, and the various departments of domestic industry?

8. What part to healthful exercise, accomplishments and recreation?

9. What part to the comfort of relatives, friends and the family circle?

10. What period to the relief of poverty, affliction and ignorance?

11. At what hour will you retire to repose?

12. Will you close the day by religious exercises, and a careful retrospect of its several hours and duties?

Perseverence in such a course will render the remembrance of your days delightful, and give to your life a diadem of beauty, and a crown of wisdom. Do not rest in your attempts to realize the value of time, until you have learned to estimate its smaller portions. *An hour* faithfully improved may accomplish much. It was a rule of the excellent Bishop Taylor, that at the striking of every clock, we should enter with renewed vigor upon the appropriate duty of the new hour, and lift up the heart for God's assistance and blessing.

The philosopher was wise who affixed to his study door the inscription, "time is my estate. If I lose *an hour* how shall I repay the debt?" In the science of economy, the sage Franklin enjoined the *care of half pence*. In a system of thorough improvement of time, the *care of half hours* is equally essential. With respect to many of the other gifts of heaven, our perception is quick, and our attachment ardent. We prize beauty because it charms the eye, though it fades like the summer rose; wealth, because it purchases the things that we call good, though they perish in the using; reputation, because the consciousness of it is pleasant, though a breath may blast it; let us not then forget to value above all these possessions—*time*, which may be so improved as to purchase the bliss of eternity.

"Great God!" says the eloquent Massillon, "for what purpose dost thou leave us here on earth, but to render ourselves worthy of thine eternal inheritance! Every thing that we do for the world shall perish with it, whatsoever we do for thee shall be immortal. And what shall we say to thee, on the bed of death, when thou shalt enter into judgment with us,

and demand an account of the time which thou didst grant to be employed in glorifying and serving Thee? Shall we say, we have had friends to boast of on earth, but have acquired none to ourselves in heaven; we have made every exertion to please men, and none to please the Almighty? And shall it be written upon our lives—*time lost for eternity.*”

LETTER II.

ON DOMESTIC EMPLOYMENTS.

SINCE Industry is the aliment of contentment and happiness, our sex are privileged in the variety of employments that solicit their attention. These are so diversified in their combinations of amusement with utility, that no room need be left for the melancholy of a vacant and listless mind.

Needle-work, in all its forms of use, elegance and ornament, has ever been the appropriate occupation of woman. From the shades of Eden, when its humble process was but to unite the fig-leaf, to the days when the mother of Sisera looked from her window, in expectation of a "prey of divers colors of needle-work on both sides, meet for the necks of those that take the spoil," down to modern times, when Nature's pencil is rivalled by the most exquisite tissues of embroidery, it has been both their duty and their resource. While the more delicate efforts of the needle, rank high among accomplishments, its neces-

sary departments are not beneath the notice of the most refined young lady. To keep her own wardrobe perfectly in order, to pay just regard to economy, and to add to the comfort of the poor, will induce her to obtain a knowledge of those inventions, by which the various articles of apparel are repaired, modified and renovated. True satisfaction, and cheerfulness of spirits, are connected with these quiet and congenial pursuits. This has been simply and fortunately expressed, by one of our sweetest poets.

*"It rains—What lady loves a rainy day?
She loves a rainy day, who sweeps the hearth,
And threads the busy needle, or applies
The scissors to the torn or thread-bare sleeve;
Who blesses God that she has friends at home;
Who in the pelting of the storm will think
Of some poor neighbor that she can befriend;
Who trims the lamp at night, and reads aloud
To a young brother, tales he loves to hear.
Such are not sad even on a rainy day.*

Knitting is a quiet employment, favorable to reflection, and though somewhat obsolete, not unallied to economy. It furnishes a ready vehicle of charity to the poor, and most appropriate during the severity of winter.

The timely gift of a pair of coarse stockings has often relieved the sufferings, and protected the health of many an ill-clad and shivering child. It seems to be well adapted to save those little fragments of time, which might else be lost. Mrs. Hannah More whose example imparts dignity, and even sacredness to common things, was partial throughout her whole life to this simple employment. One of her most interesting and playful letters, accompanied a sample of this kind of industry, as a present to the child of a friend,—and stockings of her knitting entered into her charities and were even sold to aid missionary efforts in foreign climes.

Since the domestic sphere is entrusted to our sex, and the proper arrangement and government of an household are so closely connected with our enjoyments and virtues, nothing that involves the rational comfort of home is unworthy of attention. The science of house-keeping affords exercise for the judgment and energy, ready recollection, and patient self-possession, that are the characteristics of a superior mind. Its elements should be acquired in early life; at least its correspondent tastes and habits, should never be overlooked

in female education. The generous pleasure of relieving a mother or friend from the pressure of care, will sometimes induce young ladies to acquaint themselves with employments which enable them, when the more complex duties of life devolve upon them, to enjoy and impart the delights of a well-ordered home. To be able to prepare for, and preside at a table which shall unite neatness with comfort and elegance; where prodigality is never admitted, nor health carelessly impaired, is both an accomplishment and a virtue.

Permit me here to quote the opinion of Mrs. Childs—one of the most indefatigable laborers in the varied fields of literature, that our country has produced. “A knowledge of domestic duties is beyond all price to a woman. Every one of our sex ought to know how to sew, and knit, and mend, and cook, and superintend a household. In every situation of life high or low, this sort of knowledge is of great advantage. There is no necessity that the gaining of such information should interfere with intellectual acquirement, or even with elegant accomplishment. A well-regulated mind can find time to attend to all. When a girl is nine or ten years old, she should be ac-

customed to take some regular share in household duties and to feel responsible for the manner in which her part is performed,—such as her own mending, washing the cups and putting them in place, cleaning silver, or dusting and arranging the parlor. This should not be done occasionally, and neglected whenever she finds it convenient,—she should consider it her department. When older than twelve, girls should begin to take turns in superintending the household,—keeping account of weekly expenses,—making puddings, pies, cake, &c. To learn effectually,—they should actually do these things themselves,—not stand by,—and see others do them.”

It has been sometimes urged as an objection against the modern system of female education, that the wide range of science which it comprises, turns the attention of the young from household duty, and renders them impatient of its details and labors. This argument seems to address itself to mothers. It might be in their power to refute it, and to associate in the minds of their daughters, with a love of study, a knowledge of the unpretending pursuits of their own future province. Maternal affection would naturally prompt the wish to

save them from the mistakes and perplexities to which ignorance might in future expose them. Though perhaps little native affinity exists between intellectual pursuits and household cares, they may doubtless be so united as to relieve each other; and she will give strong proof of the best education and the best regulated mind, who neglects the fewest duties, and despises none.

It will be found that in the science of house-keeping, no slight degree of practical knowledge is required, to direct others with propriety and profit.

In a state of society, where equality prevails, and where the desire of living without labor, is but too common, servants thoroughly trained in their several departments, are not always to be found. To instruct those who are ignorant; to know when they have done well, and when they have done enough; when they have reason to be weary, or a right to complain, it is necessary to have had some personal experience of what is required of them. Complaints of the errors of domestics are very common, and with none more so than with those who are least qualified to direct them. Perhaps too much is expected of

them; perhaps we neglect to make due allowance for their causes of irritation, or to sympathize in the hardships of their lot. Possibly we may sometimes forget that the distinctions in society are no certain test of intrinsic merit, and that we "all have one Master, even Christ."

Yet admitting that the ranks and stations are not very clearly defined, and that the lower classes sometimes press upon the higher. This is in accordance with the spirit of a republic, and all should be willing to pay some tax for the privileges of a government, which admits such an high degree, and wide expansion, of happiness. If our domestics draw back from the performance of what the spirit of feudal times, or aristocratic sway might exact, a remedy still remains; to moderate our wants, and study simplicity in our style of living. Much time will be rescued for valuable pursuits, when the love of show and vanity, with their countless expenses and competitions, are stricken from our household lists. She who is content to live more plainly than her neighbors, and dress more simply than her associates, when reason, or the wishes of her friends require it, has gained no slight ascent in true philosophy.

You will perhaps think me an advocate of ungraceful toils, or a setter forth of strange and obsolete opinions. Still bear with me in your courtesy for the few remarks that remain. I would not decry the embellishments of life. I render them due honor; but I should grieve to see you deficient in its plain and practical duties. Fashion will take care of the former, so I have argued for the latter. Fortunate shall I esteem myself, if the attention of but one mind shall thus be turned to those occupations which render home delightful.

I have ever thought it desirable that young ladies should make themselves the mistresses of some attainment, either in art or science, by which they might secure a subsistence, should they be reduced to poverty. Sudden and entire reverses are not uncommon in the history of affluence. To sustain them without the means of lessening the evils of dependence, when health and intellect are at our command, is adding helplessness to our own affliction, and increasing the burthen of others. When the illustrious Henry Laurens, by the fortune of our war of Revolution, was held a prisoner in the Tower of London, he wrote to his two daughters, who had been nurtured in

all the tenderness and luxury of Carolinian wealth,—“it is my duty to warn you to prepare for the trial of earning your daily bread by your daily labor. Fear not servitude; encounter it, if it shall be necessary, with the spirit becoming a woman of an honest and pious heart; one who has been neither fashionably nor affectedly religious.” The accomplished Madame de Genlis pronounced herself to be in possession of thirty trades, or varieties of occupation, by which she could, if necessary, obtain a livelihood. It was a wise law of some of the ancient governments, which compelled every parent to give his son some trade or profession, adequate to his support. Such is now the variety of departments open to females, as instructors in schools and seminaries of their own sex, that they may follow the impulse of their genius in the selection of a study or accomplishment, and while they pursue it as a pleasure, can still be prepared to practise it as a profession.

Among the pleasant employments which seem peculiarly congenial to the feelings of our sex, the culture of flowers stands conspicuous. The general superintendence of a garden has been repeatedly found favorable to

health, by leading to frequent exercise in the open air, and that communing with Nature which is equally refreshing to the heart. It was laboring with her own hands in her garden, that the mother of Washington was found by the youthful Marquis de la Fayette, when he sought her blessing, as he was about to commit himself to the ocean, and return to his native clime. Milton, who you recollect, was a great advocate that woman should "study house-hold good," has few more eloquent descriptions, than those which represent our first mother at her floral toil amid the sinless shades of Paradise.

The tending of flowers has ever appeared to me a fitting care for the young and beautiful. They then dwell as it were, among their own emblems, and many a voice of wisdom breathes on their ear from those brief blossoms, to which they apportion the dew and the sun-beam. While they eradicate the weeds that deform, or the excrescences that endanger them, is there not a perpetual monition uttered, of the work to be done in their own heart? From the admiration of these ever-varying charms, how naturally is the tender spirit led upward in devotion to Him, "whose hand

perfumes them, and whose pencil paints." Connected with the nurture of flowers, is the delightful study of Botany, which imparts new attractions to the summer sylvan walk, and prompts both to salubrious exercise and scientific research. A knowledge of the physiology of plants, is not only interesting in itself, but of practical import. The brilliant coloring matter which they sometimes yield, and the healthful influences which they possess, impart value to many an unsightly shrub, or secluded plant, which might otherwise have been suffered to blossom and to die, without a thought.

It is cheering, amid our solitary rambles, to view the fair objects that surround us, as friends, to call to recollection their distinctive lineaments of character, to array them with something of intelligence or utility, and to enjoy an intimate companionship with nature. The female aborigines of our country were distinguished by an extensive acquaintance with the medicinal properties of plants and roots, which enabled them, both in peace and war, to be the healers of their tribes. I would not counsel you to invade the province of the physician. In our state of society, it

would be preposterous and arrogant. But sometimes, to alleviate the slight indispositions of those you love, by a simple infusion of the herbs, which you have reared or gathered, is a legitimate branch of that nursing-kindness, which seems interwoven with woman's nature.

And now, to sum up the whole matter. Though in the morning of youth, a charm is thrown over the landscape, every thorn in the path is hidden, every inequality smoothed, yet still, life is not "one long summer's day of indolence and mirth." The sphere of woman is eminently practical. There is much which she will be expected to do, and ought therefore to learn, and to learn early, if she would acquit herself creditably. Though to combine the excellencies of a house-keeper, with much eminence in literature or science, requires an energy seldom possessed,—still there is no need that domestic duties should preclude mental improvement, or extinguish intellectual enjoyment. They may be united by diligence and perseverance, and the foundation of these qualities should be laid *now, in youth*.

If I have annoyed you by pressing too much on your attention, the detail of humble and

homely employment, I pray you to forgive me. It is because I have felt the immense importance of establishing habits of industry, while life is taking its stamp and coloring. For "if the spring yield no blossoms, in summer there will be no beauty, and in autumn no fruit." The moments of the young are like particles of gold, washed down by the never-staying flood of time. She who neglects to arrest them, or who exchanges them for trifles, must stand in poverty before her Judge. "Thou shalt always have joy in the evening," says the good Thomas a Kempis, "if thou hast spent the day well. Wherever thou art, turn every thing to an occasion of improvement: if thou beholdest good examples, let them kindle in thee a desire of imitation; if thou seest any thing blameable beware of doing it thyself."

The province of our sex, though subordinate, is one of peculiar privilege: sheltered from temptation, and in league with those silent and sleepless charities, which bless, without seeking applause. The duty of submission, imposed both by the nature of our station and the ordinances of God, disposes to that humility, which is the essence of piety;

while our physical weakness, our trials, and our inability to protect ourselves, prompt that trust in Heaven, that implicit leaning upon a Divine arm, which is the most enduring strength, and the surest protection.

LETTER III.

ON HEALTH AND DRESS.

THE importance of attention to health, seems to be universally admitted. Formerly, the intellectual part of our nature was too exclusively regarded in education. Its early and intense action, in every form of precocity was encouraged. Now, our physical welfare is also consulted. That increasing care is bestowed on the safety of the temple where the mind lodges,—proves that the structure of that mind is better understood; and the mutual re-action of the ethereal and clay companion, more clearly comprehended.

The great amount of learning and eloquence, embodied in the medical profession, have labored to illustrate and enforce this subject. It is not presumed that this little volume can suggest any thing new. Yet it is always safe to repeat those precepts which have peculiar affinity with the safety and comfort of our sex.

The feebleness of females, especially in our

large cities, has long been a source of remark, regret and even reproach. It has been supposed in our own country, that their vigor has deteriorated, within two or three past generations. Habits of refinement and affluence, seem to have produced an enervating effect. It is important to enquire for the remedy and to pursue it.

Regularity in the hours of rising and retiring, perseverance in exercise, adaptation of costume to the variations of climate, simple and nutritious aliment, and "temperance in all things" are necessary branches of a sanitary regimen. The power of enduring exposure to our varying and extreme seasons, is desirable. Yet as there are constitutions of such susceptibility and temporary states of health to which all are subject, when such exposure would be both unwise and unsafe, young ladies should acquaint themselves with some of those forms of active domestic industry, which offer a substitute, when walking abroad is prohibited. Every house-keeper can instruct her daughters in a sufficient variety of these, to prevent her health from suffering, during those occasional sequestrations which must unavoidably occur. Though exercise in the open air,

should be daily taken by the young, whenever it is possible,—yet it is better to cultivate that pliancy of constitution, which can healthfully exist for a temporary period without it, than to create such entire dependence on external movement, as to induce languor and sickness when it is necessarily precluded. A judicious mother proposed to her daughters a certain proportion of morning exercise with the broom, in the parlor and in their own apartments. “This sweeping makes my arms ache,” was their objection after the trial of a few days.” “Try it till your arms do *not* ache,” was the laconic, but kind reply. Her own experience had taught her, that muscular, as well as mental energy required habitual training. The same perseverance by which we strengthen a weak memory, or store an unfurnished mind, will usually re-animate or fortify our drooping physical powers. Since without health, industry must slacken, and enjoyment be destroyed, and since the imbecility of our sex affects peculiarly and banefully the whole frame-work of domestic well-being, I may be indulged in adverting to whatever materially influences it.

On the subject of Dress, I am aware that

much has been said and written to little purpose. The laws of fashion are often so preposterous, and her dominion so arbitrary, that Reason and Philosophy can have little hope of gaining ground in her empire. Neither is it wise to expect of the young, a superiority to reigning modes. Singularity is never desirable. Still it is possible not to be eccentric, and yet to avoid such a style of dress, as opposes taste, produces deformity, or leads to unnecessary expense. There are a few rules which ought never to be violated by females.

1st. *Not to permit fashion to impair health.* This is worse than "to spend money for that which is not bread, and labor for that which satisfieth not." Strong contrasts between the costume worn at home, and abroad, in the morning and at evening parties, are exceedingly prejudicial, during the severity of our climate. How often is it the case, that a comfortable garment, worn throughout the winter's day, is thrown off at night, and one of the lightest texture assumed, with a formidable portion of the chest and shoulders left uncovered, while the thermometer is below zero. Mothers! who are surely interested in the life of your daughters, and whose advice

it is hoped, is never rejected, *these things ought not so to be.*

Would that I might persuade my fair young friends, of the importance of preserving their feet in a comfortable and regular temperature. A delicate silk or cotton stocking, with a thin soled shoe, in the depth of winter, will exhibit to advantage a foot of exquisite symmetry, but the consequences may be mournfully computed, when the "evil days of disease come, and the years draw nigh, when, as far as health is concerned, it must be said, there is no pleasure in them."

Another point of extreme importance in dress, is to avoid compression. The evils of obstructed circulation are formidable. Stricture in the region of the lungs and heart, is deeply perilous. Those watchful sentinels who keep the sacred citadel of life,—and never take rest when the other parts of the body slumber, deserve better treatment. How unjust and ungrateful to compel them to labor in fetters, like a galley-slave, and to put those servants to the torture, who turn the wheels of our existence, both night and day. I conceive some knowledge of anatomy to be a requisite part of female education. An acquaint-

tance with the complicated structure, and mysterious mechanism of this clay temple, would prevent from so thoughtlessly bringing destructive agents to bear upon its frailty. It might also heighten adoration of that Being by whom, to borrow the beautiful figure of Watts, this "harp of thousand strings is made, and kept in tune so long."

Few circumstances are more injurious to beauty, than the constrained movement, suffused complexion, and labored respiration that betray tight lacing. The play of intelligence and varied emotion, which throw such a charm over the brow of youth, are impeded by whatever obstructs the flow of blood from the heart to its many organs. In Greece, where the elements of beauty and grace were earliest comprehended, and most happily illustrated, the fine symmetry of the form was left untortured.

But the influence of this habit on beauty is far less to be deprecated than its effect upon health. That pulmonary disease, affections of the heart, and insanity, are in its train, and that it leads some of our fairest and dearest to fashion's shrine to die, is placed beyond a doubt, by strong medical testimony.

Dr. Mussey,^o whose Lectures on Intemperance have so forcibly arrested the attention of the public, asserts, that "greater numbers annually die among the female sex, in consequence of tight lacing, than are destroyed among the other sex by the use of spirituous liquors in the same time." Is it possible that thousands of our own sex, in our own native land, annually lay, with their own hand, the foundation of diseases that destroy life, and are willing for fashion's sake thus to commit suicide?

The author of "The Influence of Mental Cultivation upon Health," asserts, that "whatever tends to diminish the capacity of the chest, tends also to produce organic disease of the *heart* and *lungs*. Tight lacing is ever a dangerous practice, for if the heart does not suffer, the lungs and spine very frequently do."

Dr. Todd, the late Principal of the Retreat for the Insane, in Connecticut, to whom science and philanthropy are indebted, and whose loss affection and gratitude deplore, adduced many instances of the fearful effects of obstructed circulation on the brain. Being requested by the Instructress of a large female Seminary, to enforce on her pupils the evils of

compression in dress,—he said, with that eloquence of eye and soul, which none who once felt their influence can ever forget,—“The whole course of your studies, my dear young ladies, conspires to impress you with reverence for antiquity. Especially, do you turn to Greece, for the purest models in the fine arts and the loftiest precepts of philosophy. While sitting as disciples at the feet of her men of august mind, you may have sometimes doubted how to balance, or where to bestow your admiration. The acuteness of Aristotle, the purity of Plato, the calm unrepented satisfactions of Socrates, the varied lore of Epicurus, and the lofty teachings of Zeno, have alternately attracted or absorbed your attention. Permit me to suppose that the high-toned ethics of the stoics, and their elevation of mind, which could teach its frail companion the body, the proud lesson of insensibility to pain, has won your peculiar complacence. Yet while meting out to them the full measure of your applause,—have you ever recollected that modern times, that your own country came in competition for a share of fame? Has it occurred to you, that your own sex, even the most delicate and tender part of it,

exceeded the ancient stoics in the voluntary infliction of pain, and extinction of pity? Yes, some of the timid and beautiful members of this Seminary, may enter the lists with Zeno, Cleanthus, and Chrysippus, and cherish no slight hope of victory. I trust to prove, to you that the ancient and sublime stoics were very tyroes in comparison of many a lady of our own times. In degree of suffering, in extent of endurance and in perfection of concealment, they must yield the palm. I do assure you, that its most illustrious masters, fruitful as they were in tests to try the body, never invented, imagined, or would have been able to sustain that torture of tight-lacing, which the modern belle steadily inflicts without shrinking, and bears without repining, sometimes to her very grave. True, they might sometimes have broken a bone, or plucked out an eye, and been silent. But they never grappled iron and whalebone into the very nerves and life-blood of their system. They might possibly have passed a dagger too deeply into the heart, and died:—but they never drew a ligature of suffocation around it, and *expected to live*. They never tied up the mouths of the millions of air-vessels in the lungs, and then

taxed them to the full measure of action and respiration. Even Pharoah only demanded brick without straw for a short time. But the fashionable lady asks to live without breathing for many years.

"The ancient stoics taught, that the nearest approach to apathy, was the perfection of their doctrine. They prudently rested in utter indifference. They did not attempt to go beyond it. They did not claim absolute denial of all suffering. Still less did they enjoin to persist and rejoice in it, even to the "dividing asunder of soul and spirit." In this, too, you will perceive the tight laced lady taking a flight beyond the sublime philosopher. She will not admit that she feels the slightest inconvenience.

"Though she has fairly won laurels to which no stoic dared aspire,—yet she studiously disclaims the distinction which she faced death to earn, yea, denies that she has either part or lot in the matter, surpassing in modesty, as well as in desert, all that antiquity can boast, or history record."

We may appeal for evidence to the ravages of extreme stricture in dress, even to the annals of the King of Terrors. Dr. Reese, in

speaking of the dissection of two young females who had been addicted to tight lacing, remarks:—"the adhesion of parts, and derangement of structure, were truly frightful."

The opinion of other eminent physicians, it would be easy to adduce. But I have already to ask your forbearance for a subject, on which I have been diffuse because there seemed much to say, and in earnest, because I felt it to be of importance, to the most beautiful and interesting part of the community. The late lamented Dr. Spurzheim, assumed the proposition, that the "physical education of women, was of more importance to the welfare of the world than that of men." May each of you, my dear young ladies, avoid every species of imprudence to which your period of life is so prone, and not mourn at last, when the flesh and body are consumed, saying how have I hated instruction, and my heart despised reproof."

2nd. *Dress should never infringe on delicacy.* This point I would prefer not to dilate upon, but rather recommend to your own reflection, and innate sense of propriety. Unfavorable inferences are usually drawn of those who go to extent in any fashion, whose principle is

display. Minds of true refinement will never be in danger of upholding a style of dress which leads to indecorous exposure; and those of discernment cannot fail to perceive, that what may be thus gained in admiration, is lost in respect.

3rd. *Dress ought not to involve unnecessary expense.* Every individual, in providing her wardrobe, should call into exercise a correct judgment, and a thorough understanding of what she can afford. Thus she will avoid the uncomfortable habit of pressing on those who supply her purse, demands which are inconsistent with their finances. To make superiors in fortune, the standard of imitation, betrays a defective judgment; since a proper expenditure for them, would in others be extravagant and unjust. Having ascertained the point of expenditure, beyond which you ought not to go, an account-book should be regularly kept, and the price of every article purchased, with the date affixed, be accurately and neatly recorded, that current expenses, with their annual amount, may be ever subject to your own inspection, and the revision of those by whom your resources are furnished. Whatever your allowance, or income may be,

never spend the whole upon your own person. By moderating your wants, and by economy in the preservation of your wardrobe, reserve to yourself the power and the pleasure, of occasional and simple presents to those whom you love. Let the claims of the poor come into remembrance. A well regulated mind will experience true satisfaction in avoiding the purchase of an expensive garment, that the sickly sufferer may be clothed and fed.

It is a beautiful self-denial for the affluent to set an example of plainness and simplicity. Such an influence is peculiarly salutary in our state of society, where the large class of young females who earn a subsistence by labor, are so addicted to the love of finery, as often to omit the substantial and comfortable articles of apparel, and lay up nothing from the wages of many years of service. The conscientious will therefore inquire, not merely if they are able to indulge in expensive decorations, but what will be the effect of *their example*, on those who are not.

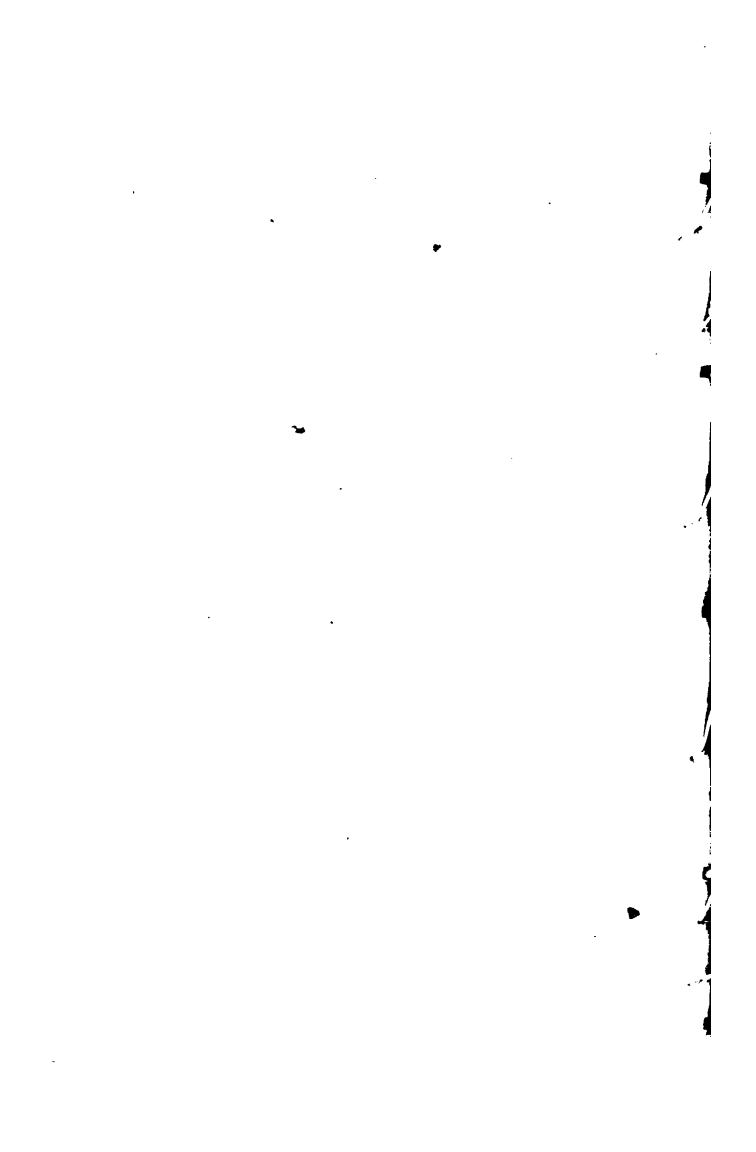
4th. *Dress should not engross too much time.* The duties of the toilette should be confined to regular periods, and to reasonable bounds. She who contemplates her own image too con-

stantly, will be less disposed for higher subjects of thought. Neatness, comfort, and a becoming costume, are objects worthy of attention. But a profusion of ornament, is neither necessary nor graceful to the young. There is a beauty in their own fair season of life, and in the sweet and happy temperament which ought to accompany it, that strikes more strongly on the heart, than "gold or pearls, or costly array." A showy style of dress, is peculiarly inappropriate to those who are pursuing their education. It indicates that something besides study, has taken possession of the heart.

To highly ornamented and striking apparel *in church*, there are still stronger objections. A morning spent in the decoration of the person, is a poor preparation for the duties of the soul. An eye roving about among surrounding costumes, during the solemn services, and an heart disposed to comment upon them in the family, are little in unison with the design of the Sabbath, and sinfully subversive of its sacred privileges.

Let us now dismiss the subject of Dress, with the single remark, that simplicity and grace seem to be the elements of its power

to charm, and that those will be the least in danger of permitting it to absorb too much of their time, whose hearts are filled with the love of higher and better things.



LETTER IV.

ON MANNERS AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

THE desire of pleasing is natural and strong in youth. If guided to correct channels, it is an incentive to improvement, and happiness. When it rejects the motive of selfishness, and seeks only to "please others for their edification," it becomes a christian virtue. This may be easily distinguished from that restless pursuit of popularity, which being the offspring of ambition and pride, ever involves some elements of disappointment and envy.

In the art of pleasing, the instruments least dependent on contingencies, are undoubtedly *good manners*. They are of far more importance to the young, than the adventitious distinctions of dress and beauty: more valuable than the latter, because more permanent; and more certain in their results than the former, because a style of dress which attracts one class of admirers may be repulsive to another, but fine manners are intelligible to all mankind, and a passport in every country.

Affability and the smile of cheerfulness, are expected from the young, as spontaneous expressions of the felicity of their fair season of life. "Softness of manner, and complacency of countenance," says Dr. Darwin, "gentle, unhurried motion, and a voice clear and tender, are charms that enchant all hearts." It was the praise of Anne of Austria, the mother of Lewis the Great, that her manners evinced dignity without pride, more striking than even her youth and extreme beauty, and that there was in her countenance such a living charm of benignant expression, as communicated to those who beheld her, a tenderness chastened by respect.

Good manners, to be consistent, must be founded on a principle of justice. Their tribute of deference and respect should be first paid where it is due; to parents, teachers, ministers of religion, civil rulers, superiors in knowledge, and those whose whitened heads bear the crown of time and of virtue. It seems to be among the evils of modern times, that such distinctions are too little acknowledged. Wealth attracts the gaze of the vulgar, and sometimes wins influence unassociated with talents or piety; but those grades of

rank, which are announced by the voice of Nature, and the precept of God, demand our reverence. They constitute orders of nobility, even in a republic, and those who pay them due honor, reflect honor upon themselves. Especially, is it fitting and graceful for the young of our sex, to recognize the claims which a refined and religious community impose. Would that I might persuade each one of them, to show the most marked deference to age. It was remarked of a lady distinguished both for talents and accomplishments, that when in company, she always selected the oldest persons for her first and highest attentions, afterwards, children, or those who from humble fortune, or plain appearance were liable to be neglected, shared that regard from her, which made them happy and at ease. Her manners if analyzed, seemed a combination of equity and benevolence; first, rendering what she considered to be due, and then pursuing what she felt to be delightful. Respect to age, and kindness to childhood, are among the tests of an amiable disposition. Undeviating civility to those of inferior stations, and courtesy to all, are the emanations of a well educated mind, and finely balanced feel-

ings. There is a certain blending of dignity with sweetness, not often exhibited, but always irresistible. Without creating reserve, or chilling friendship, it repels every improper freedom, and couples respect with love. It combines a correct estimate of the high destinies of our nature, with a tender sympathy for all its infirmities.

There was a fine character of dignity, in the manner of females of the higher classes in the olden time. We, of modern days, think it was sometimes carried too far; but we are verging to the opposite extreme. So anxious are we to *be entertaining* in society, that we reserve no power by which its follies are to be checked, or its tendencies elevated.

The mother of Washington was pronounced a model of the true dignity of woman. She possessed the lofty characteristics of a Roman matron, with a heart of deep and purified affections, and a majesty that commanded the reverence of all. At the head of a large household, whose charge, by the death of her husband, devolved solely upon her, the energy and dignity of her character preserved subordination and harmony. To the inquiry what was the course pursued in the early education of

her illustrious son, she replied, "*the lesson to obey.*" When the war of the revolution terminated so gloriously for his country and for him, and after an absence of nearly seven years, he hastened to pay his filial respects to his venerated parent; the officers of the French and American armies were anxious to see the mother of their Chief. A splendid festival, given at Fredericksburg, to welcome the conquerors of Cornwallis, furnished them with an opportunity. "The foreign officers," says Mr. Custis, in his "*Recollections of Washington,*" "had heard indistinct rumors of her remarkable life and character, and forming their judgments from European examples, were prepared to expect that glare and show, which would have been attached to the parents of the great, in the countries of the Old World. How were they surprised when the matron, leaning on the arm of her son, entered the room dressed in the very plain, yet becoming garb, worn by the Virginian lady of the old time of day. Her address, always dignified and imposing, was courteous, though reserved. She received the complimentary attentions that were paid her, without evincing the slightest elevation, and at an early

hour, wishing the brilliant assembly much enjoyment of their pleasure, retired as she had entered, resting upon the arm of her son." Such an effect had her simplicity of garb, and dignity of bearing, upon the officers accustomed to the heartless pomp of European courts, that they affirmed it was no wonder that "America produced the *greatest men*, since she could boast of such *mothers*."

The style of manners, like the fashion of dress, changes with different ages, and takes a coloring from the spirit of the times. Ceremonies vary, but the ornament of courteous and dignified deportment is never obsolete. It will adorn and give weight to character wherever refinement is appreciated, or kindness of heart beloved.

With regard to accomplishments, as they are popularly termed, so much depends upon circumstances, the wishes of those who direct your education, and the impulse of taste, that it would be impossible to give any definite rule, except that they do not interfere with the attainment of solid learning. The true order of acquisition seems, to be, *first*, what is necessary; *second*, what is useful; *third*, what is ornamental. To reverse this arrangement,

is like beginning to build at the top of the edifice. Let the foundation be laid firm and deep, and the superstructure may safely admit of ornament. Stated parts of the day should be allotted as their province, that they need not entrench on the limits of more essential, though less alluring pursuits.

Before entering upon this part of my subject, permit me to present a solemn passage from that eminent author, who has given a motto to this volume, and whose writings, having been celebrated throughout the world, ought at least to claim the deference of her own sex. "Is it fair," she asks, "that what relates to the body, and the organs of the body, I mean those accomplishments which address themselves to the *eye* and to the *ear*, should occupy almost the whole thoughts; while the intellectual part is robbed of its due proportion, and the spiritual part has almost no proportion at all? Is not this preparing the young for an awful disappointment, in the tremendous day, when they must be stripped of that body, of those senses and organs which have been made almost the sole objects of their attention, and shall feel themselves in possession of nothing but that spiritual part,

which in education was scarcely taken into the account of their existence?"

A taste for Drawing, heightens the admiration of Nature by enforcing a closer examination of her exquisite workmanship, from the hues of the wild flower, to the grandeur of the forest, and the glowing beauties of the extended landscape. The construction of maps, often taught to children at school, is a good preparation for the study of perspective, while the vignettes with which they may be adorned, give exercise and expansion to the young germs of taste. Those who make such advances in Drawing and Painting, as to be able to sketch designs and groups from History, derive high intellectual pleasure, from this elegant attainment.

Music, at present the most popular of all accomplishments, is a source of surpassing delight to many minds. From its power to sooth the feelings and modify the passions, it seems desirable to understand it, if it does not involve too great expense of time. Vocal music is an accomplishment, within the reach of most persons. "I have a piano within myself," said a little girl "and I can play on that, if I have no other."

An excellent clergyman, possessing much knowledge of human nature, instructed his large family of daughters, in the theory and practice of music. They were all observed to be exceedingly amiable and happy. A friend inquired if there was any secret in his mode of education. He replied, "when any thing disturbs their temper, I say to them *sing*, and if I hear them speaking against any person, I call them to sing to me, and so they have sung away all causes of discontent, and every disposition to scandal." Such an use of this accomplishment, might serve to fit a family for the company of angels, and the clime of praise. Young voices around the domestic altar, breathing sacred music, at the hour of morning and evening devotion, are a sweet and touching accompaniment.

Instrumental music, being more expensive in its attainment, both of money and time, and its indifferent performance giving pain to those of refined sensibility, seems scarcely desirable to be cultivated, unless the impulse of native taste prompts or justifies the labor. The spirited pen of Miss Martineau, in her "Five first years of youth," has sketched a pleasing description of a young lady possessing a strong

predilection for music. "She sang much and often, not that she had any particular aim at being very accomplished, but because she loved it, or, as she said, because she *could not help it*. She sang to Nurse Rickham's children,—she sang as she went up and down stairs,—she sang when she was glad and when she was sorry,—when her father was at home, because he liked it, and when he was out, because he could not be disturbed by it. In the woods at noon-day, she sang like a bird, that a bird might answer her, and if she awoke in the dark night, the feeling of solemn music came over her, with which she dared not break the silence."

Dancing, which from ancient times ranked high among accomplishments, has occasionally fallen into disrepute, from the late hours, and display in dress, with which it is too often associated. It would be difficult to say why such accompaniments have been found necessary. It should be entirely divested of them, and of the excitement of mixed company, when it is taught to young ladies, who are attending school. Without these restrictions, it has been known to break in upon a prosperous course of study, and substitute frivo-

lous thought, and vanity of dress; and surely the period allotted to female education is sufficiently limited, without such abridgment.

The polished Addison asserted that the principal use of a lady's being taught dancing, was that she might "know how to sit still gracefully." As a mode of exercise in the domestic circle, it is healthful, and favorable to a cheerful flow of spirits. I was once accustomed to witness it in a happy family, where the children at the close of the reading and lessons which diversified the long winter evenings, rose to the music of the piano, while the parents, and even grand-parents, mingling with the blooming circle, gave dignity to the innocent hilarity in which they participated. There was nothing in this to war with the spirit of the prayers which were soon to follow, or to indispose to that hymn of praise, which halloed their nightly rest. Of dancing, with its usual combinations of vanity, waste of time and exposure of health, this cannot be said; and for any amusement or accomplishment necessarily attended with these serious drawbracks, I would not be considered an advocate.

Reading aloud with propriety and grace, is

an accomplishment, worthy the acquisition of females. To enter into the spirit of an author, and convey his sentiments with a happy adaptation of tone, emphasis and manner, is no common attainment. It is peculiarly valuable in our sex, because it so often gives them an opportunity of imparting pleasure and improvement to an assembled family during the winter evening, or the protracted storm. In the zeal for feminine accomplishments, it would seem that the graces of elocution had been too little regarded. Permit me to fortify my opinion, by the authority of the Rev. Mr. Gallaudet. "I cannot understand, why it should be thought, as it sometimes is, a departure from female delicacy, to read in a promiscuous social circle, if called upon to do so, from any peculiar circumstance, and to read too as well as Garrick himself, if the young lady possesses the power of doing it. Why may she not do this, with as much genuine modesty, and with as much of a desire to oblige her friends and with as little of ostentation, as to sit down in the same circle, to the piano, and play and sing, in the style of the first masters? If to do the former is making too much of a display of her talents, why should not the

latter be so? Nothing but some strange freak of fashion, can have made a difference."

Fine reading is an accomplishment, where the inherent music both of the voice and of the intellect may be uttered; for the scope and compass of each, is often fully taxed, and happily developed, in the interpretation of delicate shades of meaning, and gradations of thought. Its first element to be *clearly understood*, is often too much disregarded, so, that with some who are pronounced fashionable readers, low, or artificial intonations so perplex the listener, as to leave it doubtful whether the "uncertain sound, be piped or harped."

Thus it sometimes happens that in fashionable penmanship, the circumstance that *it is to be read*, seems to have been forgotten. Fine hand-writing, and an easy epistolary style, are accomplishments which every educated female should possess. Their indispensable requisites, are neatness, the power of being easily perused,—orthographical and grammatical correctness. Defects in either of these particulars are scarcely pardonable. You are aware that chirography is considered one of the talismans by which character is decyphered. Whether this test may be depended on

or not, the fact that letters travel farther than the sound of the voice, or the sight of the countenance can follow, renders it desirable that they should convey no incorrect or unfavorable impression. The lesser niceities of folding, sealing and superscription, are not beneath the notice of a lady. Mrs. Farrar, in her excellent little work on Letter-writing remarks, that it is "well to find out the best way of doing every thing, since there is a pleasure in doing things in the *best way*, which those miss, who think *any way* will do." Do not indulge in a careless style of writing, and excuse yourself on the plea of haste. This nourishes a habit which will be detrimental to excellence. Our sex have been complimented as the possessors of a natural taste for epistolary composition. It is an appropriate attainment, for it admits the language of the heart which we understand, and rejects the elaborate and profound sciences in which we are usually deficient. Ease and truth to nature, are its highest ornaments, and Cicero proved himself to be no less a master of its excellencies, than of his more sublime art of eloquence, when he said, "whatever may be the subject of my letters, they still speak the language of conversation."

To a finished female education, the acquisition of Languages is generally deemed essential. The patient research which they require, is a good discipline for the mind, and the additional knowledge they impart of the etymology and use of our own native tongue, is both valuable and delightful. Yet they can scarcely be considered desirable appendages unless thoroughly understood. To preserve many in memory, even after they are carefully attained, requires more leisure than usually falls to the lot of woman, after life's cares accumulate around her. The attempt to pass off before a critic a smattering of a foreign tongue, is a vanity easily detected, and always despised. Those ladies who have the leisure, the intellect, and the love of severe study, necessary to conquer the idioms of the dead and living languages, will doubtless find stores of literature and gems of thought, sufficient to repay the toil. Still, I press the monition, *avoid being superficial*. It is the danger of females of the present age. Expected to master the whole circle of sciences, with a cluster of the fine arts in a few short years, and those years too often injudiciously curtailed by the vanities of dress and fashionable amusement, is it

surprising that they should sometimes have the reputation of possessing, what they really do not understand? Thus they are led to deception, and even become willing to appear to others, what in reality they are not. Superficial knowledge, induces superficial habits of thought. It even touches the root of moral character. Let us then be less anxious to be thought accomplished, than to possess true merit. Permit me to recommend, on this occasion, and all the other occasions of life, the sentiment of Archbishop Tillotson, "Sincerity, is to speak as we think, to do as we intend and profess, to perform and make good what we promise, and *really to be*, what we would seem and appear to be."

For those whose lot forbids both the acquisition of accomplishments, and the embellishments of dress, there remains an attainment less adventitious and more durable in its impression, than either. *True politeness*, that charm to which every nature is susceptible, is within their reach. It is often seen rendering poverty, and the plainest exterior agreeable, while its absence makes knowledge repulsive, and robs beauty of its power to please.

This was what added the most attractive

charm to the beautiful Lady Jane Grey. The learned Roger Ascham, after expatiating on her accomplishments, the elegance of her composition, and her intimate acquaintance, with the French, Italian, Latin and Greek languages; adds, as the crowning grace, the "*possession of good manners.*"

True politeness requires humility, good sense, and benevolence. To think more "highly of ourselves than we ought to think," destroys its quickening principle. Idle and heartless ceremony may spring up from its decayed root, but the counterfeit is ever detected. Its first effort is to subdue and extirpate selfishness; its next to acquire that knowledge of human nature, which will enable it wisely to regulate itself by the sympathies of those around. Its last feature, reveals alliance with a higher family than the graces. Forming a bright link between the accomplishments and virtues, it claims affinity with that heaven-born spirit which on the plains of Bethlehem, breathed in melody from the harps of angels, "peace on earth and good will to men."



LETTER V.

ON BOOKS.

A taste for reading is important to all intellectual beings. To our sex, it may be pronounced peculiarly necessary. It is important to all, because it is the way in which aliment is conveyed to the mind; and to our sex peculiarly necessary, because dwelling much on the contemplation of little things, they are in danger of losing the intellectual appetite.— Their sphere of household employment, engrossing much attention to its cardinal points, “what shall we eat, and wherewithal be clothed,” disposes the mind either to pine away in the atrophy of ignorance, or to be puffed up with the vanity of superficial knowledge. A taste for reading is therefore to them, an armor of defence. It is also a resource, when the world reveals its emptiness, or the things of the world confess their inability to satisfy the heart. Men go abroad into the busy current of life, and throw aside their chagrins and disappointments, and lose the narrowness of

personal speculation, in its ever-fluctuating tide. Home, the woman's province, admits of less variety. She should therefore, diversify it by an acquaintance with the world of intellect, and shed over it the freshness derived from the exhaustless fountains of knowledge. She should render herself an entertaining and instructive fire-side companion, by daily replenishing her treasury, with that gold which the hand of the robber may not waste, nor the rust of time corrode. The love of books is also a refuge in those seasons of indisposition, when active duties are laid aside, when even conversation is a burden, and that gaiety of heart which was as sunshine to life's landscape, has taken its flight. In youth and health, you can scarcely appreciate the truth of this argument. But confirm *now* your taste for reading into a habit, and when the evil days come, you will be better able to prove its value, than I am to enforce it.

Devote even the fragments of your leisure to some useful book. "Secure the interstices of your time," says the celebrated Robert Hall, "and you will be astonished to find how much reading you will get through in a year." Yet I trust you will not be contented to leave a

pursuit of such magnitude, to casual and interrupted portions of time. I hope to persuade you to establish a systematic course of reading. Set apart a stated period of each day for this employment. Have it understood, that it is not to be dispensed with, except from imperative necessity. Do not dismiss your habits of study, when you cease to attend school. That crisis is often a hazardous one, in the history of a young lady. If she has gained distinction there, without a radical love of knowledge, her improvement ceases with the excitement that sustained it. If a latent fondness for expensive dress and fashionable amusements was cherished in her period of classical education, she will rush into them with an eagerness proportioned to her previous restraint. Satisfied with past honors, and believing that she "has already attained, and is already perfect," she slumbers at her post, and in a few years, perceives those outstripping her, whose talents she once held in contempt. Every young lady who at leaving school, entertains a clear and comfortable conviction that she has finished her education, should recollect the reproof of the excellent Dr. Rush to a young physician, who spoke of

the time when he finished his studies : “ *when you finished your studies!* Why, you must be a happy man to have finished so young. I do not expect to finish mine as long as I live.” Life is but one great school, and we are all pupils, differing in growth and progress; but all subjects of discipline, all invested with the proud privilege of acquiring knowledge, as long as the mind retains its powers. There is an affecting lesson in the death of that philosopher, who, after it was supposed that breath had forsaken him, faintly raised his head to listen to some improving conversation that was conducted in his chamber, and even drew the curtain, saying, “ *I shall be most happy to die, learning something.*”

But while the value of knowledge renders a *taste for reading* so important, the *choice of books* is equally so. They produce the same effect on the mind, that diet does on the body. They may either impart no salutary nutriment, or convey that which is pernicious. Miscellaneous reading has become so fashionable, and its materials so multifarious, that it is difficult to know how to select, or where to fix a limit. May we not say, with my Lord Bacon, “there seemeth to be a superfluity of books.

But shall no more be made? Yea! make more *good books*, which, like the serpent of Moses, may devour the serpents of the enchanters."

Works of imagination usually predominate in the libraries of young ladies. To condemn them in a mass, as has been sometimes done, is hardly just. Some of them are the productions of the finest minds, and abound with the purest sentiments. Yet discrimination, with regard to them, is exceedingly important, and such discrimination as a novice cannot exercise. The young should therefore ask guidance of an experienced and cultivated mind, and devote to this class of reading, only a moderate portion of time, as to a recreation. Frequent and long indulgence in it, creates disgust at the patient acquisition of solid learning, as compound and poignant dishes destroy a relish for plain and healthful food. It forms habits of desultory thought, and uproots mental discipline. It makes it an object not to *read and remember*, but to *read and be amused*. So the fanciful palate is pleased, and the imagination pampered, while the hungry judgment, to borrow Cowper's simile, "looks up, and is not fed."

Among works of this description, those

which are denominated novels of deep and stirring interest, are calculated to heighten in the young mind those powers which need no excitement. In the language of Mrs. Hannah More,

“ They add fresh strength, to what before was strong.”

Habits of excursive fancy, and illusive views of life, are not salutary in their influence on those whose business it is to reason, and to act; to bear, and to forbear. If such works ever exercise a beneficial tendency, it must be in the season of age, when torpor is stealing over the faculties, when the feelings need quickening by touching the nerve of early and tender association, and memory would sink into lethargy were she not awakened by the heart. They can no longer mislead the traveller when his journey is accomplished. He can compare their highly colored delineations with the sober truth of life's “twice told tale,” and be safely entertained. Yet there is no need for the young to exhaust the cordials of age. It is wiser to be busied in furnishing a full store-house for that approaching winter, when the errors of seed-time cannot be cor-

rected, nor the sloth of harvest repaired, when the mind in its weariness, is too feeble to dig, and in its poverty, to "beg will be ashamed."

History has ever been warmly commended to the attention of the young. It imparts knowledge of human nature, and supplies lofty subjects for contemplation. It should be read with constant reference to geography and chronology. A fine writer has called these "the eyes of history." They are also the grappling irons by which it adheres to memory. As some historians are deficient in dates, or not lucid in their arrangement, a table of chronology, and an atlas, ancient and modern, should be the inseparable companions of all books of history, which are to be studied with profit. It is a good practice to fix in the memory some important eras,—the subversion of an empire, for instance,—and then ascertain what events were taking place in all other nations, at the same period of time. A few of these parallels, running through the History of the World, will collect rich clusters of knowledge, and arrange them in the conservatory of the mind.

History is replete with moral lessons. The instability of human power, the tyranny of man over his brother, and the painful truth that the

great are not always the good, mark almost every feature of its annals.

Read History, with candor and independence of mind. The opinions of the historian should be examined, and the gilding stripped from false glory. The admiration so profusely bestowed on warriors and conquerors, should be analyzed. And if conquerors are discovered to have wrought more evil than good, to have polluted the fountains of peace and liberty, and to have wantonly shed blood and caused misery for their own aggrandizement, let the sentence upon their deeds be given in equity, though the heathen world counted them as gods, and Christendom blindly sanctioned the homage.

Next in intellectual interest to History, and superior to it in its influence upon the heart, is the study of Biography. The wise and good are thus brought into familiar intercourse with us. We forget the difference of rank, or the distance upon earth's surface that divided us. We almost listen to their voices, and number them among our household friends. We see the methods by which they became distinguished, the labors by which their eminence was purchased, the piety that rendered them

beloved, and our desire of imitation is awakened. As by our chosen associates, the character is modified, so the heart exhibits some transcript of the models kept most constantly in its view.

The poets will naturally be favorites, in the library of an educated young lady. They refine sensibility, and convey instruction. They are the friends of nature and knowledge, and quicken in the heart, a taste for both. "The song of the Muse, allureth to the land of learning," says a quaint yet shrewd writer. "The Poet, saith Sir Philip Sydney, doth at the very first, give you a cluster of grapes, that full of their taste, you may long to pass further. This world is a *brazen* world,—the poets alone, deliver a *golden* one, which whoever dislikes, the fault is in their judgment, and not in the *sweet food of sweetly-uttered knowledge.*"

Your course of reading, should also comprise the annals of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Perhaps, human genius, has never displayed itself more gloriously than in these departments. To throw life into inanimate canvass,—to make dull marble breathe, indicate as much of creative power, as may be deputed to man. The efforts of the Grecian

chisel, have been the world's admiration for two thousand years. And though the colors of her pencil have faded, the names of her painters still survive in the freshness of immortality. Upon the revival of letters, genius would not long be withheld from her favorite occupations. Michael Angelo seized with unfaltering hand, the chisel of Phidias. Raphael and Titian, Correggio and Guido, successfully emulated in their radiant traces and fine conceptions, their elder brethren of the Grecian school. Architecture, in its various orders, and grades of proportion and symmetry, is worthy of attention. It is true, that the Fine Arts are not indigenous to our infant country. But her cradle-reachings have been after them, and she has surely wielded the pencil with no feeble hand. The destiny of an educated woman, may perhaps lead her to the older continent,—or before the bright eyes that explore these pages are dim with age, our native artists, or our increasing munificence, may furnish the means of viewing and admiring at home, those monuments of taste, which mingle with the glory of Europe.

Mental Philosophy, claims a high rank among the studies of youth. It promotes

self-knowledge, one of the direct avenues to wisdom. If the map of man be interesting, though darkened with crimes, and stained with blood, how much more, the peaceful map of the mind, that "mind, which is the standard of the man." "Ye admire," says an ancient Philosopher, "the Georgics of Virgil, why slight ye the georgics of the mind, which treat of the husbandry and tillage thereof?"

I am persuaded that you would find Logic, a subject of sufficient interest, to enter into your course of reading. The *art of thinking*, so important to all who have the power of thought, is possibly too little studied by our sex. Our inverted mode of reasoning, and the slight structure of our arguments, often expose us to the criticism even of school-boys. A science, which according to the concise definition of Watts, "teaches to use reason well, in inquiries after truth," is an important aid in the acquisition of all other sciences.

Ethics and sacred literature will undoubtedly occupy a prominent place in your system. These embrace a wide range, and comprehend some of the most gifted minds, of which our world can boast. Books for perusal on the Sabbath, should ever partake of the

character of that consecrated day. The command to rescue a seventh part of our time, from the vanities of life, and select such topics of meditation and discourse, as serve to prepare for a higher and purer state of existence, is indeed a great privilege. I pray you to regard it as such, and to improve it faithfully. It will break in upon the follies of the week, and form link after link of that golden chain, which binds the heart to heaven. "I have often found," says the pious Sir Matthew Hale, to his children, "by a strict and diligent observation, that a due observing the duty of the Lord's day, hath ever joined with it a blessing on the rest of my time; and the week so begun, hath been blessed and prosperous to me."

The Author of the excellent Lecture on the "Temporal benefits of the Sabbath," remarks, "almost every one knows the effect of a journey on the views that we habitually take of our business. We look back from a distance, and find that to some things we had given far too large a place in our thoughts, and in our hearts. We correct our false estimates, and return to our posts with rectified judgment, as well as renovated health. The Sabbath has a similar effect in clearing away the mists

that blind our judgment, and we shall never know in this world, from how many foolish and ruinous plans we have escaped through its influence. The current of earthly schemes and cares must be checked, the chain of wordly associations broken, or 'as to intellectual benefits, the Sabbath comes and goes in vain. The power to check this current, to break this chain, belongs chiefly to the sublime and momentous concerns of eternity. They disenchant the heart, as nothing else can, of the spirit of gain and ambition. They drive the 'strong man armed' from his castle, and give the imprisoned mind, a temporary respite."

Let the Scriptures form a part of the study of every day. Read a stated portion in the morning, with the aid of some commentary, and let its spirit go with you as a guide and a counsellor. Never read the book of Heaven in haste, or as a task, with a wandering intellect, or without subsequent meditation.

All systematic reading, should be with a fixed purpose, to remember and to profit. Cultivate the retentive power, by daily and persevering exercise. If any one complains that she has a weak memory it is her own

fault. She does not take due pains to give it strength. Does she forget the period for meals, the season for repose? Does she forget the appointed hour for the evening party, or to furnish herself with a fitting dress in which to appear there? Does she forget the plot of the last romance, or the notes of a fashionable piece of music? Yet some of these involve detail, and require application.

Why then might not the same mind contain a few historical facts, with their correlative dates? Frankly, because it does not feel the same interest, nor put forth the same effort. Some, who are not willing *entirely* to forget what they read, content themselves with making extracts from the books that pass through their hands. But this is not a successful mode of impressing their contents. To form a written memory is like "making to ourselves a graven image," and suffering the spiritual essence to escape. All reliance on memoranda is a false indulgence to memory. It is keeping her in leading-strings, when she should walk erect, like a laborer to the field. It would seem that she shared in the indolence of our common nature, and would willingly accept of any substitute, that would re-

lieve her from responsibility. But so important are her functions to the welfare of the immortal mind, that she should feel it her duty to be as sleepless as the Roman sentinel, and be made to answer for her sin, if the idea committed to her custody escape.

I am inclined to think Memory capable of indefinite improvement, by a judicious and persevering regimen. Were you 'required to analyze it to its simplest element, you would probably discover it to be a *habit of fixed attention*. Read, therefore, what you desire to remember, with concentrated and undivided attention. Close the book, and reflect. Undigested food throws the whole frame into a ferment. Were we as well acquainted with our intellectual, as with our physical structure, we should see undigested knowledge, producing equal disorder in the mind.

To strengthen the Memory, the best course is not to commit page after page verbatim, but to give the substance of the author, correctly and clearly in your own language. Thus the understanding and memory are exercised at the same time, and the prosperity of the mind is not so much advanced, by the undue prominence of any *one faculty*, as by the true bal-

ance, and vigorous action of *all*. Memory and understanding are also fast friends, and the light which one gains, will be reflected upon the other.

Use judgment in selecting from the mass of what you read, the parts which it will be useful, or desirable to remember. Separate and arrange them, and give them in charge to memory. Tell her it is her duty to keep them, and to bring them forth when you require. She has the capacities of a faithful servant, and possibly the dispositions of an idle one. But you have the power of enforcing obedience, and of overcoming her infirmities. At the close of each day, let her come before you, as Ruth came to Naomi, and "beat out that which she has gleaned." Let her winnow repeatedly, what she has brought from the field, and "gather the wheat into the garner," ere she goes to repose.

This process, so far from being laborious, is one of the most delightful that can be imagined. To condense, is perhaps the only difficult part of it; for the casket of Memory, though elastic, has bounds, and if surcharged with trifles, the weightier matters will find no fitting place.

While Memory is in this course of training, it would be desirable to read no books whose contents are not worth her care: for if she finds herself called only occasionally, she may take airs, like a froward child, and not come, when she is called. Make her feel it as a duty, to stand with her tablet ready, whenever you open a book, and then show her sufficient respect, not to summon her to any book unworthy of her.

To facilitate the management of Memory, it is well to keep in view, that her office is three fold. Her first effort is to *receive* knowledge; her second, to *retain* it; her last, to *bring it forth*, when it is needed. The first act is solitary, the silence of fixed attention. The next is also sacred to herself and her ruling power, and consists in frequent, thorough examination of the state and order of the things committed to her. The third act is social, rendering her treasures available to the good of others. Daily intercourse with a cultivated mind, is the best method to rivet, refine and polish the hoarded gems of knowledge. Conversation with intelligent men, is eminently serviceable. For after all our exultation on the advancing state of female education, with

the other sex will be found the wealth of classical knowledge and profound wisdom. If you have a parent, or older friend, who will at the close of each day kindly listen to what you have read, and help to fix in your memory, the portions most worthy of regard, count it a privilege of no common value, and embrace it with sincere gratitude.

Weekly societies, organized on the plan of recapitulation, render very important assistance to those who are earnestly engaged in a course of History. They should comprise but few members, and those of somewhat congenial taste and feeling, that no cause of restraint or reserve may impede the free action of the mind. Three or four young ladies, with one or two older ones, will be found an agreeable and profitable number. Let the system to be pursued, and the authors to be studied, be a subject of mutual arrangement, and at the stated meeting, let each compress the substance of what she has read during the week, relate the principal events with their chronology, and as far as possible mention what was taking place at the same period of time, in the annals of other nations. Opinions dissenting from those of the historian

should be freely given, with the reasons for such variation, and the discussions which arise, will both serve to fix knowledge firmly in the memory, and aid in forming a correct judgment of the character and deeds of those, whom History has embalmed. If to read each, of the same era or people, produces monotony, the history of different nations may be studied, or one can pursue a course of biography, another of mental philosophy, the natural sciences, or theology, and thus vary the mental banquet. From this partnership in knowledge, great increase of intellectual wealth will be derived, while your subjects of thought and conversation will be perceptibly elevated. "*The elevation of the mind,*" says Burke, "ought to be the principal end of all our studies: which, if they do not in some measure effect, they are of very little service to us."

Books, as a species of property, seem to be often incorrectly estimated. They are borrowed and injured without compunction, borrowed and not returned, and still the conscience is at rest. The owner may sustain inconvenience by waiting, or damage by loss, but the depredator is unmoved. If a young

lady borrows a shawl or an umbrella in a shower, she returns them without injury; if she takes the loan of a dollar from her friend's purse, she repays it promptly. But a book from her library, she may be months in reading, or in not reading; may abuse, and see abused, or not restore at all, unless the owner take the trouble to claim it. Why are the treasures of Genius, less regarded than the silk-worm's web? and why is it dishonest to steal a dollar, and honest to detain, deface, or destroy a book worth twice that sum?

I have known a kind-hearted owner of books, who prized literary property as it ought to be prized, persist in lending to careless persons, who continued tenaciously to retain possession, till at length she would be forced to go and "gather together her dispersed, that were scattered abroad." To collect and identify them was no slight labor, but patiently would she search book-shelf, sofa and work-basket, and return loaded with her recovered treasures, like a shepherd bringing stray sheep from the wilderness.

I would have books treated with reverence. I cannot bear to see even a child spoil the spelling-book from which it has learned the

alphabet. It savors of ingratitude to a benefactor. Were the books of children composed of better materials, and executed in a more tasteful style, the habit of preserving them would doubtless be earlier and more faithfully inculcated. A sort of sacredness seems to attach itself even to the *page*, on which knowledge has impressed its lineaments, and the cover which protects it from defilement, and from the atmosphere. "Every child," says Dr. Dwight, in his theology, "should be taught to pay all his debts, and to fulfil all his contracts, exactly in the manner, completely in the value, punctually at the time. Every thing which he has borrowed, he should be obliged to return, uninjured, at the time specified, and every thing belonging to others, which he has lost, he should be required to replace." Would that this excellent principle were wrought in with the basis of female education.

And now, dear young ladies, let me release you from this long dissertation upon books, after I have commended them to your intimacy as *friends*, safe, accessible, instructive, never encroaching, and never offended at the neg-

lect of any point of etiquette. Can this be said of all your associates?

When intercourse with living becomes irksome, or insipid, summon to your side the departed spirits of the mighty dead. Would you think it an honor to be introduced into the presence of princes and prelates, or to listen to the voice of Plato or Socrates? Close the door of your reading-room, and they congregate around you. Yea, a *greater than Socrates* will be there, if you ponder his words, with an humble and teachable soul. If trifles have disturbed you during the day, sages will admonish you of the serenity and dignity which ought to characterize the immortal mind.

Has ambition deluded you? the fallen monarch will show you the vanity of adulation, and the hollowness of all human glory. Are you out of spirits? the melody of the poet shall soothe you, and do for you, what the harp of David did for the moodiness of Saul. Has friendship grieved you? *They* offer you consolation, on whose virtues Death has stamped the seal, *never to change*. *Make friendship with the illustrious dead*. Your slightest wish, as a talisman, will gather from distant

climes, and remote ages, those who can satisfy the thirst of the mind, from the deepest fountains of knowledge.

One volume there is, whose spirit can heal the wounded heart. When it sorrows for its own infirmities, and for the unsatisfying nature of earth's vaunted pleasures, the voice of prophets and apostles, lifted up from its inspired pages, teaches the way to that world "where is fulness of joy, and pleasures forevermore."

Let me close in the eloquent words of the author of "Lectures to Young Men." "This book, the eldest surviving offspring of the human intellect, the chosen companion of Patriarchs, Prophets, Apostles, and of all the wisest and best men who have ever lived; this book that reveals to us the character and will of our great Creator, and final Judge; that opens for us the way of salvation through a Redeemer; unveils to our view the invisible world, and shows us the final destiny of our race; this book which God has given, expressly to teach us our character, our duty, and our prospects, which has conducted to heaven all who have reached that happy world, and must conduct us thither, if ever we attain to its blessedness;

this book ought surely to be held by us, in the highest place of respect and honor, to be made the guide of our youth, the companion of our age, our solace and support in all the prosperous or trying passages of life."

LETTER VI.

ON FRIENDSHIP.

So sweet is the idea of friendship to the human heart that its name is one of the earliest upon our lips, and latest lingers there. The little child, in its first migration from nursery to school, selects a favorite playmate, and in bestowing its simple gifts and caresses, nurses the latent capacities of friendship. "*This is my friend,*" says the young lady, who, during the progress of her education, presents ardently and proudly to her parents what she conceives to be a kindred spirit. "*My friends are gone,*" mournfully exclaims the hoary man,—and the consciousness that he must "finish his journey alone," deepens the acquiescence with which he lies down in the grave.

But the *name* of friendship is more common than the *possession*. Many who are familiar with its terms, have never tasted it in its depth and purity. They can describe and compute the "unrusting gold," but have neither the

power to acquire or to retain it. In this respect, as well as in a higher sense, "not every one that saith Lord! Lord! shall enter into the kingdom." A rare combination of virtues is requisite to friendship. Elevation of character, fixedness of principle, a generous, disinterested and affectionate spirit, are among its essential elements. It is no wonder that the plant is not of more frequent growth. I should rejoice to think that each of you were capable of firm and confiding friendship for one of your own sex. I do not refer to that principle of promiscuous association, which secures companionship in pleasure, or multiplies hasty and changeful intimacies. These are always sufficiently frequent in the ardent season of youth, and sometimes are to be repented of. The qualities that constitute a *good friend* are such as reflect lustre on the character. Among the rare excellencies of the Rev. Charles Wesley, it is recorded that he was formed for friendship. "His cheerfulness and vivacity would refresh the heart of his friend; with attentive consideration he would enter into, and settle all his concerns, as far as he was able; would do any thing for his good, either great or small; and

by a habit of mutual openness and freedom, leave no room for misunderstanding." The friendship of which I speak, and which I wish that each of you may attain and exemplify, comprises sympathy in sorrow, counsel in doubt, encouragement in virtue, that blending of the strength of two spirits which nothing but death can part, and which, cemented by piety, cherishes the hope of consummation where affection's cup hath lost the taste of tears."

Permanent friendship requires some congeniality of taste, pursuit, or principle. It does not require that opinions should always harmonize. This would involve a sacrifice of the prerogative of judgment, fettering originality of thought and freedom of intercourse. Still, a degree of similarity in mental structure is desirable. At least the ground work of character must not be of discordant materials.

Friendships founded in fondness for fashionable amusements, are prone to be slight and fluctuating. Their materials are not sufficiently durable to form a chain for the heart. Those also which spring up from community in prejudice are perverted at the root and will

scarcely be more stable than the passions or enmities which gave them birth. Nourishing baleful feelings they partake of the bitterness of what they nourish. "The friendships of youth" said a severe moralist, "are often combinations in vice, or leagues with pleasure." We cannot but hope that the epithet *often* is here misapplied. Surely the name of friendship ought not to be coupled with such a description.

Community of intellectual tastes and pleasures, is a genial soil for friendship. Hence it so frequently takes root during the progress of education. The fruits of knowledge are easily grafted upon its generous stock. The friendships of literary persons, when not disturbed by competition, are of strong growth and peculiar ardor. The interwoven tendrils and buddings of genius, communicate a fragrance peculiar to themselves. "That perfect unity of feeling, says D. Israeli, that makes of two individuals, one being, is displayed in such memorable friendships as those of Beaumont and Fletcher, whose labors were so combined that no critic can detect the mingled production of either, and whose lives were so closely united, that no biographer can compose

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the memoirs of one, without running into the life of the other."

There is also a sentiment of friendship, for the illustrious dead, to which every refined and susceptible mind is addicted. To those, whose pages communicate knowledge and delight, it turns in hours of solitude with deep and hallowed regard. They have left an imperishable bequest, a "treasure that waxeth not old." It communes with them as benefactors, it summons them in their wonted form, lineament and apparel, and rejoices in a "sad but exalting relationship with the great events, and great minds that have passed away, exploring an unbounded range of the noblest scenes, in the overawing company of departed genius and wisdom."

Congeniality of religious feeling and principle, presents firm ground-work for enduring friendship. The duties which piety enjoins, have affinity for the elements of friendship. One aims to extirpate selfishness, the other fosters a disinterested spirit. One demands a charity which "seeketh not its own, and thinketh no evil," the other prompts that sweet preference of another's good, which is allied both to benevolence and humility.

In that inimitable portrait of friendship, which inspiration has deigned to give us, the attachment of Jonathan displays a peculiar and prominent feature. He was the prince of Israel, the heir apparent to the throne. He had been early taught to attach a high value to this birthright, and with it all his hopes and prospects were associated. Yet David bore on his brow, the anointing oil, which designated him for the royal dignity. Saul could not endure the vision of an usurped sceptre. His morbid jealousy settled into deadly hatred. Yet it had no effect on the friendship of Jonathan. "As long as the son of Jesse liveth upon the ground," said the incensed king, "thou shalt not be established nor thy kingdom. Wherefore, now send and fetch him unto me, for he shall surely die." The true hearted, and disinterested prince, not only yielded his own aggrandizement, but put his life in peril for his friend. "His soul," says the sacred historian, "was knit with that of David, and he loved him as his own soul."

The friendship of David, though it was precluded by his situation, from evincing the same degree of self-sacrifice, was eminent in affecting demonstrations of gratitude, that noble

principle which dwells only with noble minds, and is both the test and admeasurement of their generosity. Who can read without emotion, his elegy on his friend, breathing in melodious strains, the plaints of tenderness and sorrow? "I am distressed for thee, my brother Jonathan: very pleasant hast thou been unto me." After his elevation to the throne of Israel when the wars and tumults through which he had long struggled, subsided a little, that he might see the dawning of repose; when royalty with its temptations to pride and selfishness were around him, he earnestly inquires, "Is there yet any left of the house of Saul, that I may show him kindness *for Jonathan's sake?*" A decrepid and miserable being is searched out, a cripple from his childhood, living in the house of another, in obscurity and dependence. Perhaps, he shrank at the thought of being brought into the presence of the monarch of Israel. "But David said unto him, "Fear not, I will surely shew thee kindness, *for Jonathan, thy father's sake*, and will restore thee all the land of Saul, thy father, and thou shalt eat bread at my table continually." His charge to the crafty Ziba, to be faithful in serving the survivor of his master's house,

is coupled with an assurance of adoption, "he shall eat at my table, as one of the king's sons." His unchangeable friendship for Jonathan, extends itself to the memory of Saul, the mortal enemy, by whom he had "been hunted as a partridge on the mountains." With what reverence does he speak of him, and with what an overflowing of affectionate gratitude does he thank the inhabitants of Jabesh-Gilead, who gave to that unhappy king the rites of sepulture. "Blessed be ye of the Lord, that ye have shewed this kindness unto your lord, even unto Saul, and have buried him. And now the Lord shew kindness and truth unto you, and I also will requite you this kindness, because ye have done this thing."

It would seem that ancient times were more favorable than our own, to the developement of self-devoted friendship. History records instances which have no parallel in modern days. In searching for the reason, we are thrown upon the different structure of society. Promiscuous association, and artificial manners are adverse to its healthful growth. Its principle seems to require concentration. If diffused over too wide a surface, it loses its essence. It is scarcely capable of expansion,

without being exhaled. Kindness, benevolence, and good manners, are due to all with whom we associate. But that intimacy which leads to entire confidence, should be bestowed on few; perhaps, only on one. Hence the choice of that single friend, becomes a matter of immense importance. Dr. Young, who has written better than any other English poet, on the subject of Friendship, and whose "Night Thoughts," I grieve to find are both neglected and decried, by too many modern readers, counsels wisely on this point:

"Deliberate on all things, with thy friend;
But since friends grow not thick on every bough,
First, on thy friend, deliberate with thyself.
Pause, ponder, sift; not eager in the choice,
Nor jealous of the chosen; fixing, fix:
Judge before friendship, then confide till death."

The tendency of the younger part of our sex, to form friendships, has been ridiculed as a weakness by some severe critics. I consider it rather as a virtue, as an indication of amiable susceptibility, and a disposition to acknowledge that mutual dependence, which is the law of our nature. Still it requires more judgment than usually falls to the lot of

youth, to guard it from that disappointment which accompanies hasty preferences and that inconstancy and danger which are created by promiscuous and changing intimacies. Correct principles, kind feelings, good sense and incorruptible integrity, are the natural and safe corner-stones for the temple of friendship. That there should be no great dissimilarity in rank, station or education, seems desirable. Where striking disparities exist, the union of sentiment cannot be perfect, and situations may arise, in which one party feeling inflated, and the other abased, loss of confidence will be the result.

If you have been so happy as to find a friend, with whom your pursuits and pleasures may be shared, whose sympathy awaits your sorrows, who gives strength to your good resolutions, and with whom your secret thoughts are as safe as in your own bosom, guard the precious treasure by every demonstration of true and invariable regard. You have found what the wise son of Sirach styles the "medicine of life." Be grateful to the Giver of all good, and be faithful to the duties that such a possession devolves upon you. As friendship is a blessing from heaven, consecrate it as

the means of mutual preparation for admission there.

Merit confidence by frankness, at the same time, that you guard with fidelity, whatever secret may be entrusted to you. "Reserve wounds friendship, and distrust destroys."

To point out to each other, mutual faults and imperfections, in the spirit of tenderness, and with a view to improvement and elevation of character, marks a high grade of attainment in the science of friendship. Avoid every tendency to fickleness, or temporary alienation from slight causes. Remember the fine precept of Hamlet:

"The friends thou hast, and their adoption tried,
Grapple them to thy soul with hocks of steel."

If I have been diffuse on this subject, my dear young friends, I shall still trust to be forgiven. I have been anxious that you should possess yourselves of the elements of a science, more sublime than love, because less selfish, which is in grief a comforter, in difficult duty a double strength, which has power to heighten joy, to ennoble all good properties, and to fit for the intercourse with pure spirits, in a happier clime.

I cannot better close these remarks, than by citing the example of Klopstock, whose confiding simplicity of character prepared him to awaken regard, who was even to the chill atmosphere of fourscore years, surrounded by tender and warmly expressed sympathies, and of whom it was beautifully said, that "all his life he clung to friendship, as the child clings to the breast of its mother."

LETTER VII.

ON CHEERFULNESS.

Among the ingredients of happiness, few are more important than a habit of cheerfulness. Its lineaments are always beautiful. They have a tendency to reproduce themselves. The calm smile often images itself on the brow of another, and the sweet tone, if it fail to call forth one equally sweet, still soothes the ear and lulls the soul with its melody. A melancholy countenance, and a plaintive voice are contagious. "I have always," said the good Vicar of Wakefield, "been an admirer of happy human faces." The sentiment is universal. The pleasure thus derived compensates for the absence of beauty, and supplies the deficiency of symmetry and grace.

Cheerfulness is expected from the young. It is the natural expression of the temperament of life's brightest season. We are disappointed when we see a frown or gloom upon those features, which we persuade ourselves should be ever cloudless. It is as if in gathering

spring's early violets, we found them thorny, or divested of fragrance. The open, clear glance, the unsuspecting aspect, the smile hovering around the lips of the gentle speaker, and interpreting more perfectly than words the harmony that dwells within, are inexpressibly cheering to those whom care has depressed, or age furrowed, or suffering taught distrust.

The young, in cultivating those habits which promote cheerfulness, should remember that they are meeting the just demands of the community, paying an appropriate rent for their lodge among the flowers. That the happiness of others, may be thus promoted, will be a strong motive to the amiable and kind, to study those rules on which so valuable a science depends.

A cheerful demeanor is particularly expected of *young ladies*. In their case, its absence is an especial fault. For if among woman's household duties it is numbered that she makes others happy, and if in order to do this successfully, she must in some degree be happy herself, cheerfulness should be early confirmed into habit, and deeply founded in principle.

A contented and grateful disposition is one

of the elements of cheerfulness. Keeping our more minute blessings steadily in view, will be found a salutary exercise. Little kindnesses from those around us, should be reciprocated, and returned in the spirit of kindness. Forgetfulness of favors, or any tendency to ingratitude on our part, should be guarded against as an inroad upon justice, and a sure omen of incorrect and unhappy moral tendencies. Recognition of the daily gifts of our unwearied Benefactor, promotes cheerfulness and peace of mind. Contrast will aid us in their estimation. The pure water which from its very abundance we cease to value, would be fully appreciated by the traveller parching amid African deserts, and by the poor camel of the caravan. The healthful air, which invigorates every nerve, and for which we fail to thank God, would be hailed by the suffering inmates of some crowded hospital, or the pale prisoner in his loathsome dungeon.

By remembering those whom disease has immoveably chained, or those whose eye and ear, light and sound, have forsaken, we better learn to estimate the luxury of motion, and the value of those senses by which we hold communion with nature and with mind. The

mansion that affords us shelter, the food that sustains us and with whose reception the Beneficent Creator has connected satisfaction, the apparel fashioned to the comfort of the ever varying seasons, remind many tender hearts of the children of poverty, quickening both liberality to them, and love to the Father of all. The history of despotic governments, of the horrors of war, and the miseries of ignorance and heathenism, should aid in impressing a sense of our own great indebtedness, and in shedding over the face and demeanor the clear sunshine of cheerful gratitude. But, as it is impossible to recount those mercies which are "new every morning and fresh every moment," our whole existence should be pervaded by the spirit which moved the pious poet to exclaim,—

"Almighty Friend, henceforth to Thee,
A hymn of praise my life shall be."

The habit of discovering good qualities in others, is a source of diffusible happiness. Though a knowledge of human nature, teaches that the best characters have a mixture of infirmity; it still admits that in the worst, there

are some redeeming virtues. The telescope that reveals the brightness of the most opaque and remote planets, is more valuable than the microscope that detects motes in the sunbeam and deformed insects feeding even upon the rose's heart. A disposition to dwell on the bright side of character, is like gold to the possessor. One of the principal ingredients in the happiness of childhood, is freedom from suspicion and kind and loving thoughts toward all. Why might not that sweet disposition combine with a more extensive intercourse with mankind?—A habit of searching out the faults of others, like that of complaining of the inconveniences of our lot, grows with indulgence, and is calculated both to increase evil, and to perpetuate its remembrance.

A tendency to slander, destroys innocent cheerfulness, and marks even the countenance with malevolence. The satisfaction which it brings is morbid, and betokens internal disease. To imagine more evil than meets the eye, betrays affinity for it, and to delight to deepen that which forces itself on our observation, marks a deep degree of moral disease, and contributes to disseminate it. But to "distil out that soul of goodness which is contained in

evil things," is a chemistry worthy of those guardian spirits who heighten the joy of heaven, when "one sinner repenteth." Strive therefore, as a means of cheerful and happy thought, to palliate rather than to condemn frailty, and so to bring into prominence the good qualities of those with whom you associate, that the mind dwelling in an atmosphere of brightness, may shed on those around a reflection of its own joy, a faint semblance of that beam, which the prophet bore on his face, when he descended from his mountain-converse with the All-Perfect.

Cheerfulness is promoted by a consciousness of being usefully employed. Active industry is favorable to health and elasticity of spirits. The assurance that our daily pursuits advance the comfort or improvement of others, is a balsam to the heart. That our time, talents and influence are devoted to their highest and best ends, is an assurance of inestimable value. It would seem that those engaged in the different departments of education, should therefore evince a sustaining principle of cheerfulness. To advance the intellectual and moral benefit of others, is a blessed mission, and should "wear its jewel" visibly.

The more instructors of youth cultivate a dignified cheerfulness, the more they will extend and deepen their influence. It might seem that *to teach* is the natural province of our sex. And if every young lady, wherever she might be situated, should make it her object to impart to all those younger or less favored than herself, who come in contact with her, some portion of the accomplishments, the knowledge or the piety that she possesses, the sweet consciousness of not living in vain, would cheer her meditations, and irradiate her countenance and manners with the charm of benevolence.

Endeavor to preserve cheerfulness of deportment, under the pressure of disappointment or calamity. That principle is weak at the root, which is unable to resist obstacles. The vessel is but ill-constructed that cannot retain its integrity, against rough winds or an opposing tide. Life has many ills, but the mind that views every object in its most cheering aspect, and every doubtful dispensation as replete with latent good, bears within itself a powerful and perpetual antidote. The gloomy soul aggravates misfortune, while a cheerful smile often dispels those mists that portend a

storm. Form a habit of *being* cheerful under adverse circumstances. "Our happiness," says a fine writer, "is a sacred deposit, for which we must give account." A serene and amiable temper is among its most efficient preservatives. Admiral Collingwood, in his letters to his daughters, says, "I never knew your mother to utter a harsh or hasty thing to any person in my life." Of Archbishop Leighton, it is related, by one qualified to judge, that "during a strict intimacy of many years, he never saw him for one moment in any other temper than that in which he would wish to live and to die." Though some, may with more ease than others, attain equanimity of character, yet the cheerfulness that surmounts care, disappointment and sorrow, must be the result of cultivated principle, of persevering effort, and the solicited succor of the grace of God.

A good conscience is essential to consistent cheerfulness. "Were thy conscience pure, says the excellent Thomas à Kempis, thou wouldest be contented in every condition. Thou wouldest be undisturbed by the opinions and reports of men concerning thee;—for their commendations can add nothing to thy good-

ness, nor their censures take away from it;—*what thou art, thou art*:—nor can the praise of the whole world make thee happier or greater in the sight of God. Thou wilt enjoy tranquillity, if thy heart condemn thee not. Therefore, do not hope to rejoice, but when thou hast done well.” A decided preference of the right, though the wrong may be rendered most alluring, and the conviction of having intended to do well, is necessary to self-approval. Success, and the applause of others, may not always bear proportion to the motives that actuate us. We may be sometimes blamed when our designs were pure, or praised when we are not conscious of deserving it. Such results must indeed often happen, since this is a state of probation and not of reward. The *true record* must be kept within. Its appeal is to a tribunal that cannot err. The waiting and trusting spirit, may surely be cheerful. It is a weak faith, that cannot look above mistake and misconstruction up to the clear shining of the Sun of righteousness. It is but a decrepid cheerfulness that can walk abroad, only when the breeze is soft, and the path verdant.

We are instructed to believe, that *praise* is the spirit of heaven. Cheerfulness and giving

of thanks, ought therefore to be cultivated by all who have a hope of dwelling there. If we were to take up our residence with distant friends, we would wish to acquire some knowledge of their tastes, that we might so accommodate our own, as to become a congenial inmate. If we were to sojourn in a foreign country, we would not neglect the study of its language, or the means of intercourse with its inhabitants. If the spirit of a clime, where we hope to dwell eternally, is revealed to us, let us not be indifferent to its requisitions. Let us fashion the lineaments of our character, after that bright and glorious pattern,—that if we are so happy as to obtain entrance therein, its blissful inhabitants may not be to us as strangers, nor their work a burden;—but we be fitted by the serenity learned on earth, to become “fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the household of God.”

LETTER VIII.

ON CONVERSATION.

So great a part of our time is devoted to conversation, and so much has it the power to influence the social feelings and relative duties, that it is important to consider, how it may be rendered both agreeable and useful. In all countries where intelligence is prized, a talent for conversation ranks high among accomplishments. To clothe the thoughts in clear and elegant language, and to convey them impressively to the mind of another, is no common attainment.

Conversation, to be interesting, should be sustained with animation. Warmth of heart must put in motion the wheels of intellect. The finest sentiments lose their force, if uttered with lassitude and indifference. Still, the most fluent speakers are not always the most agreeable. Great rapidity of enunciation should be avoided. It perplexes minds of slow comprehension, and confuses those which are inured to habits of reflection. It sometimes

proceeds from great quickness of perception, and is sometimes an affectation of sprightliness, but will usually be found to produce fatigue, rather than to give pleasure.

A proneness to interrupt others, is still more offensive than excessive volubility. Scarcely any brilliance in conversation can atone for this. It is an infraction of the principle of mutual exchange, on which this department of social intercourse depends. The term itself conveys an idea, if not of equal rights, at least of some degree of reciprocity in the privilege of receiving and imparting thought. Even those who most admire the fluency of an exclusive speaker, will condemn the injustice of the monopoly. They will imagine that they themselves might have uttered a few good things, had they been allowed an opportunity. Perhaps some appropriate remark arose to their lips, but the proper time for uttering it, was snatched away. It is possible that regret for one's own lost sayings, may diminish the effect of even a flood of eloquence. So that piqued self-love will be apt to overpower admiration, and the elegant and indefatigable talker be shunned, except by the few who are silent from dulness, or patient listeners from

principle. The encounter of a number of these earnest and fierce speakers, the clamor, the tireless competition, the impossibility of rescuing thought from the confusion of tongues, the utter frustration of the legitimate design of discourse, *to be understood*, would be ludicrous, were it not painfully oppressive to the nerves.

As Pythagoras imposed on those who would be initiated into his philosophy, a long term of silence, so they who would acquire the art of conversation, should *first learn to listen*. To do this with an appearance of unwearied attention, and as far as possible with an expression of interested feeling on the countenance, is a species of amiable politeness, to which all are susceptible. It is peculiarly soothing to men of eminent attainments, or refined sensibility, and is a kind of delicate deference, which the young are bound to pay to their superiors in age.

Another mode of imparting pleasure in conversation, is to lead others to such subjects as are most congenial to their taste, or on which they possess the most extensive information. From this will arise a double benefit. *They* will be satisfied, and *you* will reap the fruits

of their knowledge. This was one of the modifications of benevolence practised by the late Dr. Dwight, himself one of the most accomplished and eloquent men in conversation, whom our country, or any other country, has ever produced. That you may observe this rule, with regularity, do not permit yourself to estimate too lightly the attainments of those, whom education has less favored than yourself. Among them you will often discover strong common sense, an acquaintance with practical things, and a sound judgment of the "plain intent of life," in which minds of greater refinement may be deficient. This meek search after knowledge from the humblest sources, is graceful in the young; and the virtuous, however laborious may be their lot, or obscure their station, are deserving of such respect, and made happier by it.

The late Dr. Rush, was pronounced by a gentleman highly endued with cultivated taste, and knowledge of human nature, "one of the most interesting men in conversation, that our country has produced. I always felt spell-bound in his presence. In analyzing the secret of his powers, it seemed that his *art of pleasing consisted in making others pleased with*

themselves. He never descended to flattery. His compliments came rather from an approving eye and manner, than from his lips. His ready tact seemed instinctively to discover, the subjects on which you were best qualified to converse. To these subjects, he would adroitly and pleasantly lead the way. Then, as if by magic, you would find yourself at home in his presence, moving freely, and with exhilarated spirits in your own native element; and when you left him, you could not fail to add, to other valuable acquisitions made through him, an increased fund of self-respect."

Those, who would please others, should never talk for display. The vanity of shining in conversation, is usually subversive of its own desires. However your qualifications may transcend those of the persons who surround you, it is both unwise and unkind to obtrude them upon their notice, or betray disregard of their opinion. It is never politic to humble those whom you seek to conciliate. It is a good rule not to speak much of yourself, or your own concerns, unless in the presence of friends, who prompt these subjects, or whose advice you are anxious to obtain. It was among the amiable traits in the character

of Sir Walter Scott, never voluntarily to allude to those splendid productions of his genius, which were winning the wonder and applause of every clime. There is a politeness, almost allied to piety, in putting out of view our own claims to distinction, and bringing forward the excellencies of others.

But in studying to render conversation agreeable, let us not forget that it should have an higher object than merely the art of pleasing. It was a noble rule of the celebrated Cotton Mather, "never to enter any company, where it was proper for him to speak, without endeavoring to be useful in it." Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe, who eminently possessed the talent of conversation, and so united it with an amiable disposition, that it was said of her, she was never known to have uttered an unkind, or ill-natured remark, made it the means of moral improvement to others, by commending in their presence, some persons distinguished by the particular virtue, which she desired them to imitate. Thus she often led to the formation of good habits, and by her eloquence, reformed and elevated the characters of those around her.

Avoid exaggeration in discourse. Those

of lively imaginations are very prone to this fault. When the addition of a few circumstances, or the coloring of a single speech, would so embellish a narrative, their veracity is not proof against the temptation.

Spare to use the language of flattery. Truth seems to abandon the guidance of those young persons, who indulge much in its dialect. Every habit of hyperbolical expression, impairs confidence. Obtain an accurate knowledge of the meaning of words, and of the different shades of those reputed synonymous. Much carelessness, and superfluous verbiage in conversation, might be prevented by a habit of strict definition of terms, and a precise adaptation of them to the facts which are stated, or the sentiments which are conveyed. The study of etymology, might not only be brought into daily practical use, by ladies, but be rendered a moral benefit. Yet in these days of high intellectual cultivation, in which females so liberally partake, the sacrifice of veracity in common discourse, cannot be resolved into ignorance of the import of language, so correctly as into the desire of shining, or making amusement at the expense of higher things. "It is very difficult," says the excellent

Mrs. Hannah More, "for persons of great liveliness to restrain themselves within the sober limits of strict veracity, either in their assertions or narrations, especially when a little undue indulgence of fancy is apt to secure for them the praise of genius and spirit; and this restraint is one of the earliest principles which should be worked into a youthful mind." Without sincerity, the intercourse of the lips will be but "as a sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal," and dear indeed, must be that reputation for wit, which is purchased by the forfeiture of integrity.

You are doubtless aware that our sex have been accused of a tendency to remark with severity upon the foibles of character. It has been gravely asserted that we were prone to evil-speaking. *Is it so?* Let us candidly canvass the point. We may have temptations to this vice, peculiar to ourselves. We have more leisure for conversation than men. Our range of subjects is more limited. The multifarious pursuits of business and politics, or the labors of scientific and professional studies, engross their thoughts, and necessarily lead them to more elevated and expansive channels. Women, acting in a narrower sphere, examine

with extreme ardor, whatever falls under their observation, or enters into competition with them. When employments weary, or amusements fail, *character* is a favorite field in which to expatiate. By nature they are gifted with a facility for reading its idioms. But if they indulge themselves in searching out only its weaknesses,—if they form a taste for hunting down its deformities, and feeding, like the Hyena, upon its fleshless, lifeless carcase, are they not in danger of perverting the tides of benevolent feeling, and tinging the fountains of the heart with bitterness?

It is very difficult to ascertain whether the faults of others are presented to us without exaggeration. So little do human beings understand the motives of others, that actions may be blamed by men, which the recording Angel exults, as he writes in the pure record of Heaven.

Yet if we are sure, that those whom we hear censured, are quite as guilty as they are represented; is not the call on us rather for pity than for punishment? Is it not to be inferred that the community will take care to visit the error with its full penalty, and that it may be safe for us to withhold our smiting, when so

many scourges are uplifted? Perhaps, even the measure of Jewish infliction, "thirty stripes, *save one*," may be transcended, if we add our stroke."

Surely, no class of our fellow creatures, are more in need of pity, than those who have fallen into error, and are suffering its consequences. "Consider," says the excellent Caroline Fry, "the dangers, the sorrows, that lie in the path of all, to their eternal home, the secret pangs, the untold agonies, the hidden wrongs. Thus the heart will grow soft with pity towards our kind. How can I tell what that censured person suffers? That fault will cost dear enough, without my aid. So, you will fear, by an harsh word to add to that which is too much already, as you would shrink from putting your finger into a fresh wound."

From the danger of evil-speaking, there is for you, my dear young friends, many sources of protection. Education has provided you with a shield against this danger. The wide circle of the sciences, the whole range of literature, the boundless world of books, open for you sources of conversation, as innumerable as they are sublime. Subjects to which

your mothers were strangers, are as familiar to "your lips as household words." You have no need to dissect character. You have no excuse for confining your attention to the frailties of your associates. What is it to you who wears an ill-assorted ribband, or a tasteless garment, or who takes the lead in fashion, to you, who can solve at ease, the most intricate problem of Euclid, and walk with Newton among the stars? What a paucity of judgment, what a perversion of intellect does it discover, to cast away the treasures of education, and place yourself on a level with the neediest mind. It is like parting with your birthright, and not receiving even the poor payment of a "mess of pottage." If there has ever been just cause for this serious charge of a love of calumny upon our whole sex, it behoves the young females of the present generation to arise and wipe it away. In those places, where danger has been discovered to exist, apply the remedy. Avoid as far as possible, all personal conversation. But when character is necessarily the subject of discussion, show yourselves the gentle excusers of error, and the advocates of all who need defence. It was once my happiness to associate

with some young people, who were in love with goodness, and in fear lest the habit of evil-speaking might unawares gain victory over them. They said, "we will form ourselves into a society against detraction. If we asperse any person, or if we neglect to defend the absent when they are defamed, we will pay a fine, to be appropriated to the relief of the poor." Truly, the purse for the poor flourished, and so did the virtues of those lovely and kind-hearted beings. The mother of one of them inquired, for she had not heard of the existence of such a society, "what is the reason that C. never joins when any one is blamed, but tries so constantly to excuse all, or when that is impossible, says nothing?" A sweet comment upon their institution. It so happened that it was organized on the shortest day of the year, and if its effects on all its members were as happy, as on this individual, they will have cause to remember it with gratitude to the longest day of their lives.

It is not proposed that you should surrender a correct judgment, or attempt to applaud the vicious. Yet do not testify too much complacency in the condemnation even of those who deserve it. You cannot compute the strength

of their temptations, or be positive that you would have offered a firmer resistance. Be tender of the reputation of your companions. Do not suppose that by detracting from their merits, you establish your own. Join cheerfully in their praises, even should they be called forth by qualities, or accomplishments in which you are deficient. Speak with severity of none. The office of censor is hardly safe for those who are themselves "compassed about with infirmity." Those who possess the deepest knowledge of human nature, are the least violent in blaming its frailties. Be assured that you testify your discrimination more by discovering the *good* than the *evil* among your fellow creatures, so imperfect are even the best, so much alloy mingles with earth's finest gold.

We have now inquired, with regard to conversation in general, how it may be rendered agreeable, safe, and subservient to utility. Before we dismiss the subject, let us turn our attention to that modification of it, which regards the intercourse of young ladies, with those of their own age, among the other sex. This is a point of no minor importance. From your style of conversation and manners,

they are accustomed to gather their most indelible impressions, not merely of talents, but of those secret springs which modify feeling, and character, and happiness. Their courtesy yields to you the choice of subjects, and induces a general acquiescence in your sentiments. But are you aware that all these circumstances are scrutinized freely in your absence, and that while you are flattering yourself with having dexterously sustained your part, cool criticism may be resolving your wisdom into vanity, or associating your wit with ill nature?

I would not seek to disguise the degree of influence, which in the radiant morning of your days, you possess over young men. It is exceedingly great. I beg you to consider it in its full import,—in all its bearings, and to “use it like an angel.”

You have it in your power to give vigor to their pursuit of respectability, to fix their attention on useful knowledge, to fortify their wavering opinions, and to quicken or retard their progress in the path of benevolence and piety. You have it also in your power to interrupt their habits of industry and application, to encourage foppishness in dress, to in-

spire contempt of a just economy and plain exterior, and to lead them to cultivate levity of deportment, or to seek for variety of amusements, at the expense of money, which perhaps they can ill afford to spend, and of time, which it is madness to waste. How important, my dear young friends, that the influence thus entrusted to you, be rationally, and kindly, and religiously used.

In your conversation with young men, avoid frivolity. Do not, for the sake of being called sociable, utter sound without sense. There seems implanted in some minds a singular *dread of silence*. Nothing is in their opinion, so fearful as a *pause*. It must be broken, even if the result is to speak foolishness. Yet to the judicious, the pause would be less irksome than the folly that succeeds it. Neither reserve nor pedantry in mixed society are desirable, but a preference of such subjects as do not discredit the understanding and taste of an educated young lady. Dress, and the various claims of the candidates for the palm of beauty and fashion, with the interminable gossip of reputed courtships, or incipient coquetries, are but too prone to predominate. Perhaps you would scarcely imagine, that by in-

dulging much in these topics, you are supposed to furnish a key to your own prevailing tastes. Still less would you be disposed to believe the freedom of remark to which levity of deportment exposes you, even among those young gentlemen who are most willing to promote it. This disposition to frivolity in conversation, repeatedly occupied the elegant and reproving pen of Addison. "If," said he, "we observe the conduct of the fair sex, we find that they choose rather to associate with persons who resemble themselves in that light and volatile humor which is natural to them, than with such as are qualified to moderate and counterbalance it. When therefore we see a fellow loud and talkative, full of insipid life and laughter, we may venture to pronounce him a female favorite."

I trust, my young friends, that nothing in your deportment, will ever authorize a conclusion like this. Yet if a young man of good education, refined taste, and elevated morality, chooses in your company trifling subjects, or descends often to levity, pause, and inquire of yourself *why it is so?*—whether he supposes this deportment most congenial to you, and

what there is in your conduct, which might warrant such an opinion.

There was both good sense, and knowledge of human nature, in the maxims given by a German author to his daughter:—"Converse always with your female friends, as if a gentleman were of the party: and with young men, as if your female companions were present." Avoid the dangerous license of conversation, both in variety of subject, and freedom of remark. Extreme delicacy on these points is expected by correct judges, and should always characterize an educated young lady.

I would not desire that conversation should be fettered by restraint, or paralyzed by heartless ceremony. But I would have the dignity of the sex maintained by its fairest and most fascinating representatives. I grieve to see folly sanctioned by the lips of beauty.

Conversation need not be divested of intelligence, by the vague fear of preciseness or pedantry. It ought to be a delightful and improving intercourse between intellectual and immortal beings. To attain excellence in it, an assemblage of qualifications is requisite; disciplined intellect, to think clearly, and to

clothe thought with propriety and elegance; knowledge of human nature, to suit subject to character; true politeness, to prevent giving pain; a deep sense of morality, to preserve the dignity of speech, and a spirit of benevolence to neutralize its asperities and sanctify its powers. It requires good talents, a good education, and a good heart: the "charity that thinketh no evil," and the piety which breathes good will to man, because it is at peace with its Maker. No wonder that so few excel in what requires such rare combinations. Yet be not discouraged in your attempts to obtain so valuable an accomplishment, since it is the medium by which knowledge is communicated, affection enkindled, sorrow comforted, error reclaimed, and piety incited to go on her way rejoicing.

I beseech you abuse it not. Every night, in the silence of your apartment, let the heart question the lips of their part in the day's doings. Recall the instances in which they have been trifling, profitless, or recreant to the law of kindness, and thus gather deeper contrition for the prayer with which you resign yourself to sleep. Lest this work be done lightly or carelessly, endeavor to make

it a faint emblem of that tribunal before which we must all stand at last; and engrave indelibly on your memory the solemn assurance that for "*every idle word, we must give account in the day of judgment.*"

LETTER IX.

ON BENEVOLENCE.

PERMIT me to press upon your attention a science at once simple and sublime; of easy attainment, yet inexhaustable in its resources, and in its results boundless as Eternity. Some sciences require superior intellect, and severe study, yet to their adepts bring little, save pride and ostentation. But in this, the humblest and the youngest may become students, and find blessed fruits springing up, and ripening in their own bosoms. It is doubtless evident to you, that I speak of the science of *doing good*. Yet I would not confine the term to its common acceptation of alms-giving. This is but a single branch of the science, though an important one. A more extensive and correct explanation is, to strive to increase the happiness, and diminish the amount of misery among our fellow creatures, by every means in our power. This is a powerful antidote to selfishness, that baneful and adhesive disease of our corrupt nature, or to borrow the forcible words of Pascal, that "bias towards our-

selves, which is the spring of all disorder."

• Benevolence multiplies our sources of pleasure, for in the happiness of all whom we bless, we are blest also. It elevates our enjoyments, by calling into exercise generous motives, and disinterested affections.

Lord Bacon, that star of the first magnitude, among the constellations of mind, says, that he early "took *all knowledge* to be his province." Will *you* not take *all goodness* to be your province? It is the wiser choice, for "knowledge puffeth up, but charity edifieth." Knowledge must "perish in the using," but goodness, like its author, is eternal.

Dear young friend, whose eye, undimmed by the sorrows of time, is now resting upon this page, suffer me, from the experience of an older and earth-worn traveller, to urge you to *bind yourself an apprentice to the trade of doing good*. *He* will be your Master, whose "mercies are new every morning, and fresh every moment." *He* will give you a tender and sustaining example, who came to "seek and to save that which was lost." They, too, will be your teachers, those bright-winged ministering spirits, who hold gentle guardianship over us, their weaker brethren, lest we

“dash our foot against a stone,” whose harps are tremulous with joy when one sinner repenteth. The wise and good of all realms and nations, those who have gone to rest, and those who still labor, you may count as your companions, a vast and glorious assembly.

Resolve, therefore, *this day*, that you will not live exclusively for your own gratification, but that the good of others, shall be an incentive to your studies, your exertions, your prayers. If you will be persuaded thus to enroll yourselves among the students of Heaven, consider attentively your own powers, situation, and opportunities of doing good.

Take a view of the ground which you occupy. Look around on every member of your own family. Contemplate all among whom you reside, and with whom you particularly associate. Are any ignorant, whom you might instruct; unhappy, whom you might console; in error, whom you might reclaim? Make acquaintance with the poor. See with your own eyes, the deficiency of their accommodations, and the nature of their sorrows. The directions given by the father of Louis XVI. to the tutor of his children, reflect more honor upon him than the circumstance of his

royal birth. "Take them to the cottages of the peasantry. I will have them see and taste the black bread which they eat. I insist on their handling the straw that serves the poorest for a bed. Let them weep; learn them to weep; for the prince who has never shed tears for the woes of others, can never make a good king."

From among the many charitable societies of the day, select one, whose design is most congenial to your feelings, or most approved by your older friends. Enroll yourself among its members, and study its management, and become familiar with the detail of its operations. Thus you will preserve your own interest from languishing, and gather instruction from the associated wisdom of others. Whatever income you may possess, or whatever stipend is allowed you, set apart *one tenth* for charitable purposes. This, surely, will not seem to you a large proportion. Some benevolent persons have devoted a fifth of their possessions to the poor. The pious Countess of Warwick could not be satisfied without distributing one third of her large income to the wants of the distressed. To a young lady, a sweet disciple in the school of charity, and

now, I trust, a participant in the bliss of angels, who inquired what proportion of her fortune she should devote to sacred uses, I suggested a *tenth*. But she replied, "I like better the rule of the publican, "Lord, the *half* of my goods, I give unto the poor." The late excellent Mrs. Isabella Graham, was in the habit of devoting a tenth part of her possessions to charitable uses, under every reverse of fortune. On one occasion, after the sale of some property, £1000 was brought her. So large a sum was new to her, and fearing the selfishness which is said to accompany riches, she exclaimed, "quick! quick! let me appropriate my tenth, before my heart grows hard."

For the division of a tenth of our substance, there seems a kind of warrant in Scripture, by the tithe which the Almighty commanded his chosen people to render. "God," says an ancient writer, "demandeth the seventh part of our time, and the tenth of our fortune, but man, in his sabbathless pursuit of the world, is prone to give him neither."

Whatever proportion you decide to consecrate, keep in a separate purse, never to be entrenched on for other purposes. If it be

only a few cents, be faithful; God can make it more, if He sees you are a good steward. Ponder the means of rendering it the most widely and permanently useful. Study the *economy of charity*. By the exercise of correct judgment, one dollar may do more good, than ten times that sum without it. As far as possible, increase your portion for the poor, by your own industry. "Shall we call ourselves *benevolent*, says the Baron Degerando, when the gifts we bestow do not cost us a single privation?" To ask your parents or friends for money, and give it carelessly to the poor, is casting into God's treasury that which costs you nothing. Either deduct it from your regular allowance, or obtain it by your own efforts. There are many kinds of elegant needle-work, and ingenious device, by which young ladies may furnish the means of charity, and at the same time confirm industrious habits. I have known some, who by rising an hour earlier in the morning than usual, and making some garment which was needed in the family, receive, from their mother, the price that would have been paid the sempstress, and thus earned the delight of making some shivering child more comfortable for the winter. If your

time is much at your own disposal, stately employ one hour out of the twenty-four, in working for some charitable object. More will be thus accomplished, than you would at first believe. To aid in educating a child, is one of the most commendable and profitable designs. Facilities are recently afforded for doing this for the children of heathen lands, in the families of Christian teachers. This seems to be emphatically, "saving a soul from death." I have seen a young lady, measuring out by an hour-glass, this consecrated portion of the day, with her hands busily employed, and the sweetest expression upon her mind-illuminated face. And I remembered how tuneful among the fragrant groves of Ceylon, would rise the hymn of praise, from the little being whom she was helping to the knowledge of God, and the love of a Savior. I reflected too, with gratitude, that at the close of the year, when she reviewed its scenes, and every day passed before her, with its crown of industry and bounty, that she would gather more true delight from their simple record, than from the tinselled recollections of gaiety, and fashion. Do you think that you are too young to enter on an organized system of doing good? I

knew a school of fifteen members, whose ages ranged from six to sixteen years, though the greatest proportion were between ten and thirteen. They were smitten with the love of doing good, and associated themselves into a society for that purpose. In a period of little more than two years, they completed for the poor, 160 garments, many of them carefully altered, or judiciously repaired, from their own wardrobe. Among these, were 35 pair of stockings, knit without sacrifice of time, during the reading and recitation of a course of History, which formed a principal part of their afternoon study. That they might render their monthly contributions the fruit of their own industry, they employed almost incredible diligence, as lessons in different sciences were daily required to be studied out of school hours. By rising an hour earlier in the morning, time was gained for the various uses of the needle, by which the pleasure of alms-giving was earned. Among their contributions, I recollect ten dollars to an Asylum for the Deaf and Dumb, five to the schools newly established among the Cherokees, and ten in the purchase of religious books, for the children of poverty and ignorance. The afternoon of Saturday,

was the only period of recess from school, during the week. This single interval of leisure, they voluntarily devoted to their chosen occupation of *doing good*.

When I have found them convened in their school-room, on this their only afternoon allotted to recreation, and observed them, instead of being engaged like others of their age, in useless sports, executing works of charity, busily employed with their needles; planning how some garment might be best accommodated to its object, or some little contribution rendered subservient to the greatest good, their eyes sparkling with the heart's best gladness, and their sweet voices echoing its melody, I could not but trust that some pure spirit of Heaven's prompting hovered over them. There was an interesting period in the history of this little institution, when its almoners first commenced distributing the "coats and garments," which, like Dorcas, they had made with their own hands, for the poor. Then they occasionally discovered instances of suffering which agitated their sensibilities, sometimes learned the lesson that gratitude is not always proportioned to benefits, and often returned exulting in the truth that "it is more

blessed to *give* than to *receive*." No more interesting report of these visits of charity was ever given, than by one lovely girl of nine years of age, who was deprived of the powers of hearing and speech. Yet though her lips the providence of Almighty God had sealed, her eye, her gesture, her finely varied countenance, glowing with the spirit of benevolence, left nothing for oral language to utter. At this period, the winter was peculiarly severe, and the wretchedness of the poor, proportionably increased. She had accompanied another almoner to the miserable lodging of a family recently removed from a clime where an extreme of penury sometimes exists, which, in our favored state of society is seldom known. She expressed strong commiseration that there was so little fire, when the wind was raging without, and the snow deep upon the earth, and that a sick baby seemed to have neither medicine nor food. Her description of the thin and tattered garments of the mother, and of her face, marked at once with sorrow and with patience, evinced that not the slightest circumstance had escaped her discrimination, while the tears of exquisite pity trembling in her eye, proved that her heart was

as little accustomed to the woes of her fellow creatures, as to their vices. I have detained you longer than I intended, with the picture of this little group. It furnishes an example in point, that the mind, in its early stages, is capable, both of the systematic arrangement, and the judicious economy of charity. Often, while gazing with delight on the circle I have attempted to describe, I fondly believed that the habits which they were then forming would have a lasting influence over their future character, and that wherever their lot might be cast, they would each of them be blessings in their day and generation.

In this our highly privileged age, the modes of doing good are exceedingly numerous. Be thankful to any one who furnishes you with one of these opportunities. By a man who was distinguished in the science of charity, it was very early in life adopted as a maxim, that "capacity and opportunity to do good, not only give a right to do it, but make the doing it a duty." Faithfully did he observe this precept. He began in the family of his father, by doing all the good in his power to his brothers and sisters, and the domestics. After he became engaged in the duties of life, and

eminent in the labors of a sacred profession, every day was distinguished by either devising or executing some design for the benefit of others. Those who intimately knew him, assert, that not a day was suffered to pass, without his having devoted some part of his income to pious purposes.

The distribution of useful books, ranks among the most efficient modes of charity. Make it a rule to choose none for that purpose, which you have not first carefully perused. Thus, you will not only enrich your own mind from their treasures, but become qualified to judge of their adaptation to particular stations, characters, and states of mind. The sacred Scriptures, and simple treatises enforcing its precepts, without any mixture of sectarian bitterness, will doubtless occupy a prominent place in your library for distribution. Biographies of persons illustrious for benevolence and piety, will be found to exercise a highly beneficial influence. Make these gifts to such as you have reason to think will put them to the best use. To the young, it will sometimes be well to lend them, on condition that at returning them, they will render you some account of their contents. This

will generally secure an attentive perusal, and also give you the opportunity of profitable conversation, either to deepen some precept in their memory, or recommend some example to their imitation. Lay useful volumes in the way of your domestics, who may thus be induced to read them. Who can tell how much good may result from a hint, or train of thought thus suggested? Dr. Franklin, so eminent for public spirit, and so distinguished in distant lands for his designs of utility, acknowledges, "if I have ever been a useful citizen, the public owe the advantage of it to a small book, which I met with when a boy, entitled 'Essays to do Good,' written by the Rev. Dr. Cotton Mather. It had been so little regarded by its former possessor, that several leaves were torn out, but the remainder gave me such a turn of thinking, as to have an influence on my conduct through life: for I have always set a greater value on the character of the *doer of good*, than any other kind of reputation."

The missionary zeal of Henry Martyn, which left his name as a burning light among the churches, was enkindled by a perusal of the life of David Brainerd. Samuel J. Mills, the pioneer of mercy to long neglected Africa, and

Fisk, who in his labors of love, followed in his Master's footsteps from despised Nazareth, to the vales of Bethany, ascended breezy Olivet, and wept among the shades of Gethsemane, derived their prompting impulse from the same book. Nor will it be possible to compute, until the scrutiny of the last account, how much of the wisdom of the truly great; of the virtue of those who have been benefactors to mankind, or of the piety of the saint who hath entered into bliss, has been the fruit of some silent and eloquent page, perhaps accidentally read, or gratuitously presented.

When I look back upon the sheltered and flowery path of childhood, one image is ever there, vivid and cherished above all others. It is of hoary temples, and a brow furrowed by more than fourscore winters, yet to me more lovely than the bloom of beauty, or the freshness of youth, for it is associated with the benevolence of an angel. Among the tireless acts of bounty, which rendered her name a watch-word in the cells of poverty, and her house a beacon-light to the broken in heart, were the gift of books, and the education of indigent children. On stated days, the children of the neighborhood were gathered around

her, fed at her table, made happy by her kindness, instructed from her lips, and encouraged to read and understand the books with which her library was stored for their use. Surely, in some of those hearts, the melody of that voice, speaking of things that "pertain unto the kingdom of God," is still treasured; among the eyes that were then raised to her with affectionate reverence, some must still delight to restore her image, as well as that which now fills with the tear of an undying gratitude.

That a desire of goodness may not evaporate in empty protestations, or lose itself in desultory paths, let us endeavor to mark out a map to regulate its course. A system adapted like the following, to every day in the week, may help both to define duty, and to secure perseverance.

Sunday.—What shall I do to manifest my gratitude to my Almighty Benefactor? Shall I not, on this hallowed day, abstain from worldly pursuits and conversation, study his holy word, recount his mercies with a thankful spirit, and solicit his blessing on all the employments and changes of the week?

Monday.—What good can I do for my

parents, or friends older than myself, to whom I am indebted? Can I perform any office conducive to their comfort, or signalize, by any increase of respect or tenderness, my obedience and affection?

Tuesday.—How can I advance the improvement of my brothers and sisters, or the servants, or any other member of the family?

Wednesday.—Can I exert any influence over my companions, neighbors or intimate friends, to read some useful book, and make its contents the subject of conversation, or to perform some good work?

Thursday.—Are there any poor whom I may visit,—sick, whom I may assist,—sorrowful, with whom I may sympathize? Have I no portion to carry to the destitute,—no message of comfort from Heaven, to those who are in adversity?

Friday.—Are there any who feel unkindly towards me, and is it in my power to render them any friendly office? Let me strive to return good for evil, if it be only by an increased kindness and courtesy of deportment.

Saturday.—What can I do for my own spiritual improvement? Let me in solitude take a review of my conduct during the week, com-

paring each day with the resolutions which were adopted to guide it. From my omissions may I learn humility and wisdom, and by self-communion and prayer, gather strength to pass another week more as I shall wish I had, when the close of life approaches.

As a part of the science which we contemplate, let us now bestow some attention on the *manner* of doing good. In imparting relief to the poor, always regard their feelings. Let the law of kindness dwell on your lips whenever you address them. Are we better than they, because a larger proportion of this world's fleeting possessions have fallen to our share? He who "maketh us to differ," will surely be displeased, if there is pride in our heart, or unkindness on our lips, towards our poor brother. Do good without seeking a return, even of grateful acknowledgment. Disinterestedness is essential to proficiency in this science. What reward did Howard expect, when he resigned the ease of affluence, and encountered hardships and peril of life, "to dive into the depth of dungeons,—to plunge into the infection of hospitals,—to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain,—to take the guage of misery, depression and con-

tempt,—to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries?” Verily, his reward is written in Heaven.

Not only must you persevere in good offices, without looking for a return, but even should ingratitude be your portion. It may sometimes happen, that the most laborious efforts for the good of others, are misunderstood, misconstrued, or repaid with indifference, and dislike. Still hold on your course, with an unchanged mind. Your object is not the applause of men, neither should their injustice deter you. You have taken Him for your pattern, who “sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust, and doeth good unto the unthankful, and evil.”

In your charities avoid ostentation. It is exceedingly disgusting to make allusions to them, as if anxious for observation and praise. Never speak of them at all, unless explanation is necessary. You may excite your young companions to similar efforts, without blazoning your own deeds. There is a sacred secresy in true charity, which he who violates, hath mistaken its nature. Scripture defines

it, in the figurative injunction, "not to let the left hand know what the right hand doeth." God, whose eye is upon the soul, and who weigheth its motives of action, perceiveth, that unless charity dwell with humility, its deeds are nothing worth. The most benevolent, have ever been the most humble.

There are certain classes of benevolent deeds, which fall so peculiarly within the province of females, as to have obtained the name of feminine charities. I allude to the relief of the famishing, and the care of the sick.

Indeed the very etymology of the word, *lady*, which has been resolved into a Saxon term, composed of *loaf*, and to *serve*, signifies that dealing food to the hungry was deemed so essential a feature in her character, that the *giver of the loaf*, and the *lady*, became synonymous. In the days of primitive Christianity, ladies of the highest rank were often found at the bedside of the humblest sufferer, meekly ministering to their necessities. The example of the sisters of a sect, differing from our own, deserves the tribute of our respect and admiration. The nuns, attached to the Romish faith, have long been eminent for their services to sick and dying strangers: they

have been found in hospitals, and amid the ravages of pestilence, fearless of contagion, and unconscious of fatigue, smoothing the sleepless pillow of disease, and never deserting the sufferer, though forsaken by all beside, until death comes to his release. Justly have they earned the appellation of "sisters of charity," and let us gladly render praise where it is due, and be quickened to emulation in the path of goodness, even by those, whose opinions may differ from our own.

An ancient writer has styled the poor, "the receivers of Christ's rents." It would seem that he had constituted them his representatives. In soothing the grief of his disciples, at their approaching separation, he said, "*me ye have not always, but the poor are always with you, and whensoever ye will, ye may do them good.*" An obligation is thus created, to extend to them the same compassion, which we would have shown to our Savior, had we been permitted to hear from his lips the assertion, that "he had not where to lay his head." If, therefore, we admit the proposition, that the "poor are the receivers of Christ's rents," there is no room left for exultation in our acts of bounty. Is there any merit in the payment

of a just debt? "Verily, boasting is excluded." The call is for gratitude, that we are allowed the privilege. The mother of the Chevalier Bayard, in her advice to him, says, "be bountiful, of the goods that God shall give you, to the poor, and needy, for to give for his honor's sake, never made any man poor; and believe me, my son, the alms that you shall dispense, will greatly profit both your body and soul."

Mankind are like one great family, dividing among each other the gifts of a common Parent. Those who are permitted to *impart*, should thank him with a cheerful and humble spirit. The interchange of benefits, the communion of giving and receiving, creates some of the best affections of which our nature is capable. The generous sympathy,—the active benevolence,—the mutual dependence, which are thus awakened and confirmed, are powerful preparatives for heartfelt piety. So that *doing good* is one of the legitimate paths to *being good*. Therefore, have I so much pressed it upon your susceptible hearts, dear young friends, now, in life's sunny morning, while God is waiting to be gracious. But now I must quit this delightful subject, lest your patience refuse longer to bear with me.

In the fabulous record of ancient times, it is stated that when the name of Plutarch was mentioned, the echo replied, *Philosophy*: so when you shall slumber beneath the clods of the valley, and your names are uttered by the living, may the response be in many hearts, *Benevolence*.

LETTER I.

ON SELF GOVERNMENT.

THAT self regulating power, by which the affections and passions are rendered subservient to the dictates of reason, and the precepts of inspiration, should be earnestly sought after by woman. Appointed to be all her life "under tutors and governors," it is for her comfort and well being, that the principle of discipline have root in her own heart. As government is best administered by those who have themselves learned subordination, so she should govern herself, that she may be better able to obey. The foundation of the unity and strength of nations, is laid in the discipline of well ordered families; and the consistence and beauty of a well balanced character may be resolved into the element of self control. Other checks are of unequal operation. The eye of authority cannot always be vigilant. The heart that we love to make happy, cannot always be near. The desire that the community may speak well of us, may produce an artificial goodness, and stir up hypocrisy to

adorn a "whited sepulchre." But that power which subjugates the warring factions of the soul, commands silence when reason speaks, and obedience when virtue lifts her sceptre, is the highest power of our nature, and must derive strength from above.

Submission to parents, teachers and superiors, harmony with brothers, sisters, and friends, prepare the way for those more arduous relative duties which devolve upon our sex: and all are rendered comparatively easy to her, whose heart is habitually governed by the understanding. I do not say that these are ever so perfectly discharged, that at the close of any day there will be no room for regret or compunction. The record of the best day on earth will but teach her who measures deed and motive by the "length and breadth of a law divine," to lay her lip in the dust. Still this painful consciousness is salutary. It may stimulate to new exertion, while it levels the fabrics of pride. We should be *convinced* of infirmity, but not *contented* with it.

To eradicate our passions,—to annihilate the strong perceptions of pleasure and pain, and to preserve apathy under severe afflictions, would be impossible, if it were desired,

and not to be desired, if it were possible. "It is not right," says the excellent Pascal, "that we should remain without pain or grief, under the afflictions which befall us,—like angels, who are above the sentiments of our nature; neither is it right that we should indulge grief without consolation, like heathen, who have no sentiments of grace. But we ought both to mourn and to be comforted like Christians; the consolations of grace should rise superior to the feelings of nature, so that grace may not only dwell *in*, but be victorious *over* us." To be devoid of emotion is not required by the Author of our being. The sympathies of this state of sorrow would be but faintly exhibited; the duties that depend upon the affections but feebly performed, were a system of stoicism established. But so to temper the discordant principles of our nature, that they disturb not the harmony of society, so to rule its stormy elements, that they make not shipwreck of the soul, is a practicable science.

It has been urged as a reproach to our sex, that we were prone to be discomposed by trifles. Our business is among trifles. Household occupations, to men engrossed by the sublime sciences, seem a tissue of trifles. Yet,

as "trifles make the sum of human things," so the comfort of a family is affected by the touching, or not touching, many minute springs, which like "a wheel within a wheel," are of secret operation, but essential importance. Susceptible as we are, by our original construction, and often rendered more so, by delicate health, or nervous temperament, trivial obstacles are sometimes encountered with less calmness, than heavy adversities. Our danger from slight causes of irritation, is obvious. So also is the remedy. Suffer not the heart to be fixed on trifles. If our sphere of action comprises them, there is no reason that they should destroy our capacity for enjoyment. Supply the thoughts with nobler subjects of contemplation. When the little angry billows beat against the bark, *look aloft*. The pole star never varies. The Pilot is always the same.

Presence of mind, is an attainment highly to be valued. Those who are desirous to possess it, must avoid the indulgence of whatever disorders the equilibrium of the mind. They should *never be in a hurry*. This is not only ungraceful, and uncomfortable to others, but often subversive of the end in view. It

has been long acknowledged by observers of human nature, that those who are most frequently in a hurry, perform the least. They overthrow their own plans, and the mind which loses its balance, like a planet which forsakes its sphere, is in danger of disconcerting the orbit of others, and running wild into the realm of disorder.

Few causes have more conspired to perpetuate the opinion of the mental inferiority of females, than their tendency to *slight, or imaginary fears*. To shriek at a reptile, to be ready to swoon at any unpleasant sight, or to express exaggerated sentiments of alarm, on every possible occasion, though it may be done for the sake of effect, or be tolerated because the person is young and pretty, is entirely beneath the dignity that our sex ought to maintain. To fancy one's self in this "matter of fact age" an object of pursuit to chivalrous knights, heroes in disguise, robbers, assassins, or spectral and undefinable beings is a species of vanity, not worthy even the name of fear, and too ludicrous for serious argument. Scorn all affectation, but consider that of *fear* as especially ridiculous. If you are really timid, set yourself to reform it, as a fault of character. Sum-

mon to uniform and rational action, the powers with which you are endowed, and strengthen them by trust in the sleepless watch of His fatherly care, without whose permission not a sparrow falleth. I have seen presence of mind so uniform, that no unexpected duty, no sudden alarm, no distressing emergency found it unprepared. The judgment was always clear, the spirits unhurried, and the mind ready for action. It was united with superior talents, and gained from all who witnessed it, perfect respect. It seemed, in this instance, to have affinity with the principle of longevity, and to aid life to run clear, and bright, and dregless, to the last drop. In beholding it intimately, as it was my privilege to do, I have often been reminded of the beautiful sentiment of Plutarch, "one of the rewards of philosophy, is long life." Rational and firm piety was at its foundation, and as it has been exemplified by woman, so doubtless it may be again.

Patience in sickness, and the power of physical endurance, have been conceded to our sex. They have also repeatedly exemplified a noble fortitude under afflictions of the heart. Illustrations might be gathered from

the pages of history, and one which has been to me peculiarly touching, is that of Lady Russell. Though, from your acquaintance with the history of England, you are doubtless familiar with it, you will allow me the gratification of slightly recapitulating it. When her husband, Lord William Russell, distinguished for patriotism and virtue, was arraigned by the turbulence and tyranny which marked a part of the reign of Charles II., and stood on his trial for life, he was inhumanly refused the benefit of counsel. All that he could obtain, was permission for an amanuensis to assist him in taking notes. Immediately his wife came to his side with her pen, serene and self-possessed, to aid him in that last extremity. When the daughter of the noble Earl of Southampton, the favorite of the people, was seen performing this painful service for her lord, a murmur of the deepest sympathy and indignation arose from that immense assembly. After his unjust condemnation, when she came to take her last farewell of him in prison, though her tenderness for him was inexpressible, she controlled the expression of grief, lest she might discompose the soul that she loved, while it stood on the solemn verge of eternity.

When she had departed, the sentenced nobleman said, "now the bitterness of death is past,"—and prepared himself for the scaffold with Christian heroism.

There are many instances where the heart rules its agony, that difficult duty may be firmly discharged, which no splendor of rank renders illustrious, and no historian's tablet records. The noble principles which actuated this illustrious lady, may operate in obscurity and poverty, where the soul, unsustained by sympathy, uncheered by human applause, depends solely on itself, and on its God. An incident of recent occurrence, exhibits equal fortitude, though differently called into exercise. One of the small islands in Boston bay, was inhabited by a single poor family. The father was taken suddenly sick. There was no physician. The wife, on whom every labor for the household devolved, was sleepless in care and tenderness, by the bed of her suffering husband. Every remedy in her power to procure, was administered, but the disease was acute, and he died. Seven young children mourned around the lifeless corps. They were the sole beings upon that desolate spot. Did the mother indulge the grief of her spirit

and sit down in despair? No. She entered upon the arduous and sacred duties of her station. She felt that there was no hand to aid her in burying her dead. Providing as far as possible for the comfort of her little ones, she put the babe into the arms of the oldest, and charged the two next in age, to watch the corpse of their father. She unmoored her husband's fishing boat, which but two days before, he had guided over the sea, to obtain food for his family. She dared not yield to those tender recollections, that might have unnerved her arm. The nearest island was at the distance of three miles. Strong winds lashed the waters to foam. Over the loud billows that wearied and sorrowful woman rowed, and was preserved. She reached the next island, and obtained necessary aid. With such energy did her duty to her desolate babes inspire her, that the voyage which depended on her individual effort, was performed in a shorter period than the returning one, when the oars were managed by two men, who went to assist in the last offices to the dead.

Instances of fortitude might be gathered from almost every rank and station, at home

and abroad. Still, it is not for calamities of great magnitude, such as fill the public eye with sympathy, that our sex are frequently summoned to prepare themselves. It is rather to bear with serene patience the lesser ills of life, and to evince the uniform guidance of correct principles and dispositions, in the sheltered province of domestic duty.

The first effectual step towards self government, is *self knowledge*. The law-giver who would adapt his code to the happiness of a people, must inform himself of their history and habits, their dangers, and resources. The physician should know something of the constitution of his patient, as well as of the symptoms of disease, ere he can safely assume the responsibility of his cure. And you, dear young friends, who would be adepts in the science of self control, must not only take a general view of the infirmities of your nature, but of your individual weaknesses, your tendencies to prejudice, and temptations to evil. Inquire what has been the source of the prevailing errors which have hitherto marked your life. Daily pursue the investigation, until you are intimate with your own peculiarities, and motives of conduct. Nightly converse with

yourself ere you retire to rest. Thus will you learn where to apply the check, the remedy, the encouragement, and with rational hope of success, mark out the path in which you are to travel, and the points where you may indulge repose.

Self government is promoted by humility. Pride is a fruitful source of uneasiness. It keeps the mind in disquiet. Too high an opinion of ourselves, involves the desire of impressing others with the same opinion. This is often attended with difficulty. If we do not succeed in inspiring them with an equal idea of our own merits, we shall be expecting more deference and regard than they are inclined to pay. So, pride will be disappointed and offended. Possibly we may see others the object of those attentions which were withheld from us. We are sure that they are less worthy than ourselves. Then pride calls in envy and jealousy, who wait in her train, and raises a mutiny in the soul. So, the mind which ought to settle and subside, that the powers which have a right to rule within it, may rise to their just degrees of ascendancy, becomes like the "troubled sea, which cannot rest." Humility is the antidote

of this evil. As those who have taken the widest range in knowledge, perceive untravelled regions beyond them, to which the "little hour-glass of man's life" is not adequate, so those who have gained the highest ascents in true wisdom, are disposed to take the lowest place at the footstool of God. Sir Francis Bacon, in a devout address to the Almighty, preserved among his manuscripts, says, "ever when I have ascended before men, I have descended in humiliation before Thee." The great Boerhaave, so distinguished by the attainment of the most serene self command, was so profoundly humble, that when he heard of any criminal condemned to execution, he would exclaim, "who can tell, whether this man is not better than I? Or if I am better, it is not to be ascribed to myself, but to the goodness of God." The celebrated Elizabeth Smith, whose short life was an unvaried scene of virtue; whose industry vanquished many obstacles to obtain the knowledge of nine languages, and whose translations from the Hebrew and German were the wonder of the learned, gained such an intimate acquaintance with her nature, and so entire a victory over

it, that her distinguishing feature was humility, and she was sweetly characterized, as

“Still unobtrusive, serious, and meek,
The first to listen, and the last to speak.”

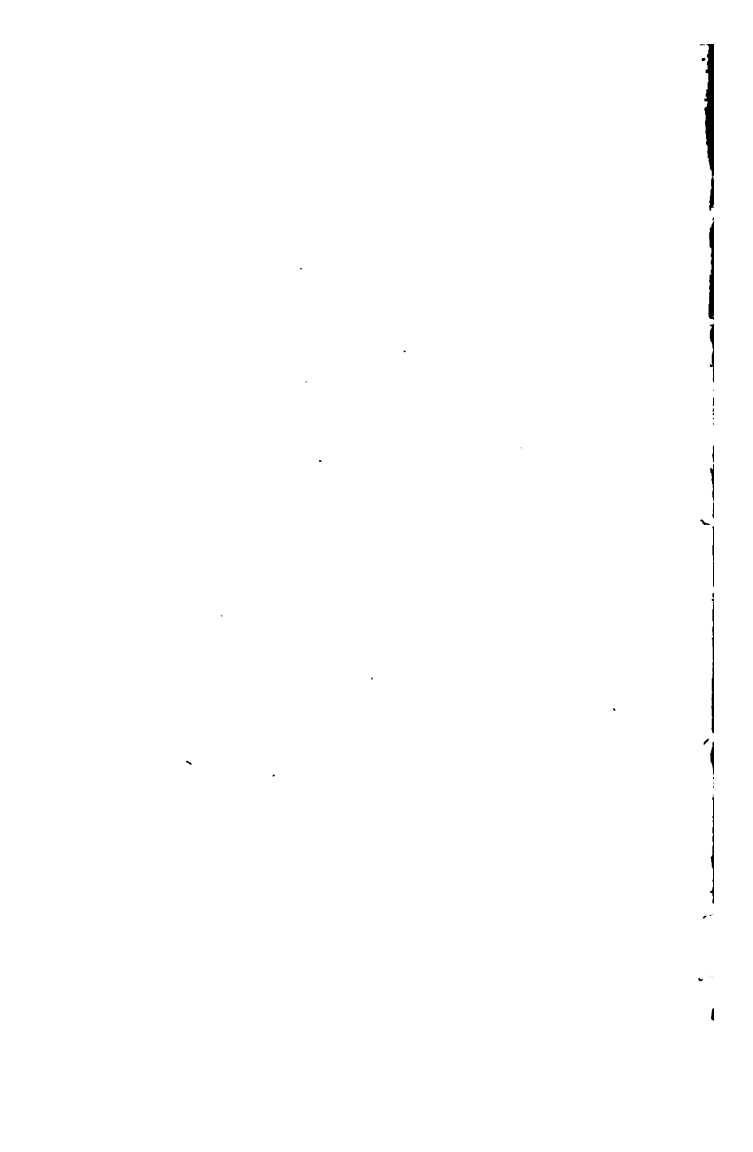
Self government is promoted by correct views of life. She who considers it a state where accomplishments will always ensure admiration, and merit receive full reward,—where it is necessary only to embark on the “smooth surface of a summer sea,” and gain the port, amid the applauses of favoring spectators, will discover that fancy and fiction have deluded her. She who imagines that its duties may be easily discharged, or their performance always appreciated; that virtue will have no foes to resist, and unalloyed happiness flourish in a congenial soil, will find that she has mistaken a state of trial for a state of reward. She who expects entire consistency from those around, and is astonished that they sometimes misunderstand and grieve her, should look deeper into her own heart, and inquire, why she exacts from others, a perfection which she has not herself attained.

Be not satisfied, my dear young friends, until you have gained that equanimity which is not depressed or elated by slight causes; that dignity which descends neither to trifle, nor to be trifled with, and that perseverance in the pursuit of excellence, which presses onward and upward, as an eagle toward the sun.

“The highest and most profitable learning,” says Thomas à Kempis, “is the knowledge of ourselves. To have a low opinion of our own merits, and to think highly of others, is an evidence of wisdom. Therefore, though thou seest another openly offend, and commit sin, take thence no occasion to value thyself for superior goodness, since thou canst not tell how long thou wilt be able to persevere in the narrow path of virtue. All men are frail, but thou shouldest reckon none so frail as thyself.”

I cannot feel, my dear friends, that self government is perfect without religion, for since there are agents within us, whose force we may fail to estimate, and which, springing suddenly into action, may destroy the fabric on which philosophy has labored for years,—and since we have not the gift of prescience,

and cannot always measure the future by the past, is it not safest to rely for aid on the Former of our bodies, the Father of our spirits, who hath said, "if any lack wisdom, and ask of Him, he giveth liberally and upbraideth not?"



LETTER XI.

ON UTILITY.

It was a king of Sparta, who counselled that the young should learn, what they would have most occasion to practise, when they reached maturity. We praise his wisdom;—yet recede from its guidance. Especially, is female education deficient in its adaptation of means to ends. And yet, our province is so eminently practical, that to disjoin acquisition from utility, seems both a greater mistake, and misfortune, than for the other sex, to adopt a desultory system.

Man lives in the eye of the world. He seeks much of his solace from its applause. If unsuccessful in one profession, he enters another. If his efforts are frustrated in his native land, he becomes the citizen of a foreign clime. He makes his home on the tossing wave, or traverses the earth from pole to pole. His varieties of situation, give scope for varieties of knowledge, and call into action, energies and attainments, which might

long have lain dormant, or been considered of little value. It is not thus with woman. Her sphere of quiet and prescribed duty, requires a more quiet training. Its scenery has few changes, and no audience to applaud. It asks the aid of fixed principles, patiently drawn out into their natural unostentatious results.

There was in past times, much discussion respecting the comparative intellect of the sexes. It seems to have been useless. To strike the balance, is scarcely practicable, until both shall have been subjected to the same method of culture. Man might be initiated into the varieties and mysteries of needlework, taught to have patience with the feebleness and waywardness of infancy, or to steal with noiseless step, around the chamber of the sick;—and woman might be instigated to contend for the palm of science, to pour forth eloquence in senates, or to “wade through fields of slaughter, to a throne.” Yet revolvings of the soul, would attend this violence to nature, this abuse of physical and intellectual energy, while the beauty of social order would be defaced, and the fountains of earth’s felicity broken up. The sexes are manifestly in-

tended for different spheres, and constructed in conformity to their respective destinations, by Him who bids the oak brave the fury of the tempest, and the alpine flower lean its cheek on the bosom of eternal snows. But disparity need not imply inferiority; and she of the weak hand and the strong heart, is as deeply accountable, for what she has received, as clearly within the cognizance of the "Great Task-Master's eye," as though the high places of the earth, with all their pomp and glory, awaited her ambition, or strewed their trophies at her feet.

Females, who turn their existence to no good account, contradict the intention of their Creator. They frustrate both his bounty and their felicity. Public opinion has not been sufficiently distinct, in its reproofs of their desultory life. It has even been held derogatory to the dignity of those who are in the possession of wealth, to understand the more humble departments of domestic industry. Hence, their exceeding helplessness, when by the fluctuations of fortune, or the common accidents of life, they are thrown upon their own resources. Their miserable imbecility in times of trial, has brought that odium upon

education itself, which only belongs to ill-directed education, or to a sentiment of false shame, which should be early rooted out. Useful occupations, ought not to be discouraged by the contempt of those, who are not obliged to pursue them for a livelihood. In the ancient republics, the diligence of our sex was honorable. Franklin, had probably in his mind, some model, depicted by the historians and poets of another age, when he said, "I would much rather see a spinning-wheel, than a piano,—a shuttle than a parasol,—a knitting-kneedle, than a visiting card." Perhaps he detected, even in his own time, of greater simplicity, a love of indolence, or display, lurking in the hearts of his fair countrywomen. Perhaps, he reasoned, as a political economist, for the good of his country. In either case, the opinion of so shrewd a philosopher, is worthy of some regard. Those employments which tend, evidently to the comforts, or necessities of existence, are least encumbered with the principle of vanity.

Ladies, who have attained eminence, as instructors, have ever early endeavored to impress on the mind of their pupils, the excellence of connecting their attainments with util-

ity. The principal of the Troy Female Seminary, whose persevering aim to improve her own sex, has been blessed with illustrious success, expresses her desire that "some plan of education, should be offered to wealth, and rank, by which female youth might be preserved from contempt of useful labor; and so accustomed to it, in conjunction with the high objects of literature and the elegant pursuits of the fine arts, as, both from habit and association, to regard it as respectable."

The editor of the "American Ladies' Magazine," whose efforts for the support and education of her fatherless children, have known no declension, is, both by example and precept, an advocate for the consecration of talents, to high and obvious utility.

Would that I might succeed in persuading you, my young friends, to strive that all your attainments, should minister to the happiness of others, as well as your own. Scrutinize the motives that prompt you to excel, either in the sciences, or arts of embellishment. Is it that you may take precedence of your associates?—or win empty adulation? The antidote for this malady, is to do nothing, say nothing, be nothing, merely from the prompt-

ing of vanity, but for the sake of your own radical improvement, and the innocent enjoyment, or mental elevation of those, among whom your lot is cast.

The principle of display, should be, as far as possible, disjoined from female education. Until this is attempted, the domestic sphere can scarcely be rationally or prosperously filled, nor will those duties be well discharged, which a republic imperiously demands of its daughters. The greatest danger arises, from what we call *accomplishments*. At first view, it seems ill-judged, to devote so much time to attainments, whose exercise is incompatible with domestic duties, and which must be laid aside, when the cares of maturity assert their dominion. Yet if in their progress, they have exerted aught of beneficial influence on the character, if they have served to soften, to refine, or subliminate the feelings, it is a severe calculation, that would condemn them as valueless.

Let us bring some of them to the test. When you sing, or take a seat at the piano, inquire whether you expect praise, or are chagrined if you do not obtain it? whether you imposed a fatiguing quarantine of urgency, ere you would expose your performance?

or whether you are content to sooth and enliven other spirits as well as your own, with those strains of melody, whose perception is a source of bliss, both to earth and heaven. In dancing, is your object to be admired? or do you seek healthful exercise, or improvement in courtesy and grace? for grace of movement, or as it has been happily styled "the poetry of motion," is of no slight import in woman. Like fine manners it aids in winning that influence, which she should consecrate to far higher purposes than personal vanity. For your skill in drawing, do you claim elaborate praise? or are you pleased simply to illustrate nature, to embody historical truth, or to catch the intelligence of living features? for the taste that appreciates the beautiful in nature or in art, is a friend to refinement and religion: and often has the tender soul, by the beauty and glory of creation, been bowed in adoration of the Creator.

But if the evidence of the utility of accomplishments, is sometimes uncertain, if even their process of self-examination, is difficult, from the disguises which vanity assumes; the solid studies, are subject to no such ambiguity. The patient labors of thought and de-

monstration, the wonders of the orb that we inhabit, the varied annal of man's way from "Eden to this hour," the mysterious mechanism of the frame, that modifies the ethereal mind, the structure of that intellect which bears the stamp of immortality, the awful order of the starry heavens, above which we hope to find an enduring mansion, impart discipline as obvious as it is salutary, and fit for destinies both human and divine.

Connect with this sure gain of knowledge, another source of profit, the *habit of imparting it*. This increases mental wealth, by putting it in circulation. A merchant would be found defective in his profession, who after having secured the profit of his labors should permit them to remain unemployed. He would merge his own character, in that of a miser, and pine with poverty, in the midst of abundance. I have no hesitation in pronouncing the labor of instruction, more beneficial to the teacher, than even to the pupil. If a young lady, when her term of school-education is completed, should devote a period to the instruction of others, she would find the advantage on her own side,—not only in the depth, confirmation, and readiness for use, which

would enhance the value of her knowledge, but in that acquaintance with human nature,—self-command, and reaction of moral training upon herself, which is above all price.

It is peculiarly important that our sex, should have their knowledge deeply rooted in memory during youth. The absorbing nature of those cares which fill their province, in maturity, are wont to forbid their making wide excursions into the realms of science. Yet should their leisure admit it, their attention will often be pre-occupied by those duties, which springing from the affections, overpower the claims of intellect, as the Banian, ever striking new roots in earth, while its head aspires to heaven, shuts from the sun the plants that once flourished on the same soil. Necessary knowledge should therefore be thoroughly acquired in youth. It should be able to bear the overshadowing of those mightier plants which drawing nutriment from the heart, spring up with the rapidity of the mushroom and the height and vigour of the cedar of Lebanon. It should be secured as a capital for life, an annuity not to be reversed.

Another argument, in favor of making the instruction of others, the crowning point of

education, is derived from those sentiments of benevolence, which if not inherent in our sex, should be cultivated until they become an integral part of character. The more solid and laborious studies, by their direct discipline on the mind, have a visible individual utility. Yet be not satisfied with this, or with any other good, which centres solely in *self*. A selfish woman is more unendurable and really more blameable, than a selfish man. She more palpably contradicts the will of her Maker. She must of necessity be unhappy. For in proportion to her concentration of enjoyment in *self alone*, and her exaction of the efforts of others to that end, will be her disappointment and weariness of spirit. Be not satisfied, therefore, to possess knowledge without diffusing it, that those less favored than yourselves may share in its blessings. Consider its acquisition as imposing a two-fold responsibility, *to enjoy* and *to impart*.

Admit it therefore, as equally the vocation and the privilege of our sex, to be teachers of good things. Even when the advantages of regular classical culture, have been denied, the requisites of a profitable instructor, may be obtained, by a persevering regimen. Self-educated peo-

ple, often excel in the power of *imparting* knowledge, as those who find out their own path, take better note of its helps and hindrances. Those who have conquered obstacles by their own unassisted strength, are good pioneers in the realm of knowledge. As they were not borne thither in a chariot, they will not be apt to foster in others, that listless waiting for a "royal way," which ends where it began. They are often eminently successful in awakening the energy of their pupils, from having fully learned its value themselves. They are well qualified to point out, and to explain, difficulty, and to have fellow feeling for those who grapple with it; as the man who acquires a fortune, better knows its worth, than he, who idly inherits a patrimony.

There is a pleasure in teaching: the high pleasure of seeing others made better, and of receiving their gratitude. There is not a more interesting circumstance in the life of Madam de Genlis, than her fondness for instructing, when only eight years old, the poor little children, who gathered around the chateau of her father. They came thither to gather rushes and to play, and this beautiful and high-born girl, leaning from the window of her apart-

ment, assiduously taught them the catechism, the principles of music, and to repeat poetry. "This," she simply expresses it, "was all I then knew myself." So much engaged, did she become in this kind office, that she was accustomed to let herself down by a cord, from the open casement of her chamber, a distance of several feet, to the terrace that she might be nearer the ignorant group, whom she was anxious to improve. "My little scholars," she says, "ranged along the wall below me, amidst reeds and rushes, looked up and listened to me with the most profound attention." What a subject for a painter. This beautiful and zealous teacher of eight years of age, indulged also her benevolence, by distributing among her pupils, such rewards of merit as she could obtain, passing in this favorite employment, all that part of the day, in which her governess being engaged in writing suffered her to follow her own inclinations. What stronger proof of an amiable and benevolent nature could be given, than this uninfluenced, unapplauded devotedness in early childhood, of its hour of play and the contents of its purse, to the encouragement of neglected and miserable villagers?

If some young lady of education and affluence could be induced to devote a portion of her time to the work of teaching, she would help to remove from it the odium of being always a mercenary profession. There was one, in this immediate vicinity, moving in the highest grade of society, elevated by genius, and a classic and refined education, who would have consecrated all her powers and sources of influence, to the work of instruction. The desire was not hastily imbibed. She had cherished it from childhood, alledging as a reason, the belief that "*she could in that way be more useful than in any other.*" In the bloom of youth, surrounded with all that could render it delightful, she writes, "I can think of no pleasanter or more useful way of spending life, than in teaching. I have not made this decision suddenly. I have pondered it in my mind, and determined, as soon as I shall have learned enough, to fix myself as a teacher." But she was suddenly removed, where there was no need that she should either teach, or be taught, save in the science of angels. An interesting volume, the "Literary Remains of Martha Day," daughter of the President of Yale College, in Connecticut,

announces to the community the loss it has sustained by her removal, and incites the favored daughters of our favored land to imitate her example.

Patriotism requires that every effort in our power, be made for the good of our country. Look at Prussia, that model for national education, where a teacher is provided for every ten of her children, and whose king nobly estimates it as the highest privilege of royalty, to be the father of his people. Among his many laws, making provision for the instruction of his realm, moral and religious training take precedence of intellectual: and it is glorious to hear the voice of a monarch enforcing the precept that "the first vocation of every school, is to train up the young in such a manner, as to implant in their minds a knowledge of the relation of man to God, and at the same time to excite and foster both the will and the strength to govern their lives after the spirit and precepts of Christianity." The Normal schools, or those established for the education of teachers, are nurseries of every virtuous habit. A brief extract from the regulations of those which exist in the obscure villages of Lustadie and Pyritz, will evince the

spirit of simple and unaffected piety, that pervades all the similar institutions. "This is intended to be a Christian school,—founded in the spirit of the Gospel. It aspires to resemble a village household of the simplest kind, and to unite its members into one family. The piety which it enforces, is to be known by purity of manners; by sincerity in word and deed; by love of God and of his word; by love of our neighbor; by willing obedience to superiors and masters; by brotherly harmony among the pupils. A thorough knowledge of the duties of a teacher is acquired, by long study of the principles and elements; by learning what is necessary and really useful in that vocation; by habits of reflection and voluntary labor; by constant application to lessons; by incessant repetition and practice; by regular industry, and well-ordered activity; according to the commandment, '*pray and work.*'"

"Their whole fabric rests on the sacred basis of Christian love," says M. Cousin, to whom we are indebted for a luminous investigation of the system of instruction in Prussia, and who by his noble zeal in the cause of education, has won a more illustrious distinction

than that of philosopher, statesman, or peer of France.

There is still another point, in which the schools of Prussia, may be cited as examples. Education is there imparted, not as the instrument of restless ambition, or worldly advancement, but as the capacity of patient usefulness, and contentment with the lot which Heaven has appointed. Here, the maxim, that "knowledge is power," seems to have received the grosser interpretation, that it is *money* also. There, to use the words of the accomplished lady, by whom this Report of National Instruction is translated, "the unfailing ends of a good education, are the gentle and kindly sympathies; the sense of self-respect, and of the respect of fellow men; the free exercise of the intellectual faculties; the power of regulating the habits and the business of life, so as to extract the greatest possible portion of comfort, out of small means; the refining and tranquillizing enjoyment of the beautiful in nature and art, and the kindred perception of the beauty and nobility of virtue; the strengthening consciousness of duty fulfilled, and to crown the whole, that 'peace which passeth all understanding.' "

Should any of my readers inquire, why I have indulged in such digressions, I have no apology to offer. The unspeakable importance of education, and the strong desire to persuade my sex to become almoners of its blessings, merited more space than I have appropriated, and more eloquence than I can command. If you have a love of the country that gave you birth, my dear young friends,—and if you have not, your code both of virtues and affections is most imperfect, are you not willing for a season to devote yourself to the culture of her children, as some remuneration for the privilege of dwelling safely under her auspices? Will you not at least, become the instructor of all in your own family, who may be made better by your influence? Will you not teach through your own example, the happiness that goodness and piety convey, the gracefulness they impart, the assimilation they give to angelic natures, and thus win all hearts to your tutelage?

Our sex in point of situation, have facilities as teachers, which are not possessed by the other. Political prejudices, and the asperities of religious controversy, sometimes fetter the operations of men and obstruct their

access to the mind. On this "debateable ground," woman is not supposed to stand. A young lady, perhaps more effectually than any other character, has power to cast the "oil of kindness," upon the waters of discord. Her locality need not be obstructed, or circumscribed by the "quick set hedge" of party jealousies. She may gather the lambs that wander, and no lion will lay waste her fold. That she will not decline this hallowed service, is already promised, by one who has for many years consecrated distinguished intellect, acquirements and piety, to the successful instruction of youth. "Let the statistics of the wants of our country be sent abroad," says Miss Beecher, in her Essay on the Education of Female Teachers, "let the cry go forth, 'Whom shall we send and who will go for us?' and from amid the green hills and white villages of New England, hundreds of voices would respond, 'Here am I, send me,' while kindred voices, through the whole length of the land, would echo the reply."

I propose that some young lady, in the enjoyment of affluence, should perform the noble charity, of commencing a Normal school, and instructing or causing to be instructed, ten of

her own sex, until they shall in their turn, be qualified to instruct others. No costly endowment need be connected with an establishment of this nature. The pupils might probably be gathered in the immediate vicinity.

If they have received the common rudiments of education, two or three hours of personal attendance daily, with perhaps, the care of a substitute, for two or three more, would with the adoption of a judicious system, prepare in the course of three years, a class of profitable teachers, for elementary schools, and even for higher departments. Why need any formidable expense be involved in such an arrangement? If some of the recipients were able to pay a small price for tuition, it might aid in the purchase of books for their use. If they were not, the bounty of our land, is never invoked in vain. The Author of the "Annals of Education," to whose perseverance and profound research, both his country and the world are indebted, says "We hope ere long, to see associations of females, engaged in supporting and preparing those of their own sex for the office of teacher. Recent calculations in a city of England, have led to the belief, that the efforts of one female

in a benevolent object were equivalent to those of thirteen males."

The preparation of competent teachers for our village schools, would be a lasting benefit to the country. The evil in our remote districts, has been incalculable, from illiterate teachers coming in contact with the mind in its season of early developement, and indelible impression. Would it be beneath the notice of a lady to bestow some systematic instruction, on such young females, as are destined to assist in the domestic care of little children, and in whom moral integrity, correct language and manners, and a sense of religious obligation, have a deeper value and wider influence, than would be readily conceded or imagined?

But I would not prescribe the particular forms in which benevolent young ladies, having the command of time, knowledge or wealth, may subserve the cause of happiness and virtue, by acting as teachers. Their own ingenuity and the circumstances in which they are placed, will best define the channels, where this hallowed charity may flow. Let them, however, adopt *teaching, as their charity*, and give to it regularly and laboriously, some

portion of every day. It need not interfere with other employments and pleasures. Even if it should curtail some amusement in which youth delights, their payment will be the gold of conscience, and those radiant and priceless memories, that visit the death bed. If it prove a self-denial, it will be a glorious one. And when they stand before that bar, where all shall be summoned, if it appear that one fellow being has been snatched from vice, or fortified in virtue, or anchored on the "Rock of salvation," through their instructions, what can the world which shall be burned as a scroll, or all the glory thereof, which shall vanish as a vision, offer in exchange for such a testimony?

LETTER XII.

ON MOTIVES TO PERSEVERANCE.

WE are impelled, my dear young friends, to higher degrees of intellectual and moral effort, by the *continually advancing character of the age in which we live*. It does not permit the mind to slumber at its post, with any hope of regaining a respectable rank in the career of knowledge. Its literary gymnasium, has no dormitories. It stamps with deficiency, what was considered a good education, twenty, or even ten years since. She who was then held accomplished, if she has remained content with her early attainments, will find herself painfully surpassed by the spirit of the times. The usury of our day, does not permit the "talent to be long wrapt in a napkin." Those studies which formerly marked the closing grade of education, are now familiar to the infant scholar. So much has knowledge divested itself of mystery and of majesty, that "the sucking child plays upon the hole of the asp, and the weaned child puts his hand upon the cockatrice den." Every thing urges us

onward, in the pilgrimage of mind. The standard is constantly elevating itself, and she who would not be left behind, must take pains to maintain a corresponding elevation.

In the department of benevolence also, as well as in that of intellect, there is an equally perceptible progress. Not many years since, the sphere of missionary labor was unexplored. Now "*its field, is the world.*" The vast machinery, by which the scriptures are dispensed to heathen climes, was undiscovered and unimagined. Many of those charities, which stoop to every variety of human wretchedness, were either unborn or in their infancy. Now the economy of charity is unfolded to the young. The most gifted minds, simplify wisdom to the comprehension of children. The bread of eternal life, is mingled with the milk of babes. Those who enter upon the stage of action, stand upon vantage-ground, and are enriched with the concentrated experience of many generations.

Our individual privileges, as well as the energetic character of the age, demand persevering exertions. We are enriched with gifts to which our ancestors were strangers. Our responsibilities are proportionably greater. The useful

arithmetical position, impressed in our childhood, that "more requires more, and less requires less," admits of a moral application. The temple of science has been thrown open, and its sanctuary so long hidden from the eye of woman, unveiled. She is invited to enter. In the olden time, our grandmothers received instruction, in the uses of the needle, the varieties of culinary science, and the naked elements of piety. They were expected to exhibit the knowledge drawn from these few sources, in its most patient, persevering and practical results. It would have been counted an "iniquity to be punished by the judges," had they spoiled their tent-stitch tapestry,—or failed in the chemistry of a pudding, or erred in the verbiage of their catechism. Most faithful were they, in the "few things" entrusted to their care. We, who in being "made rulers over many things,"—are deeply indebted to the liberality of the age, have need of quickened and zealous industry, to render a correspondent return.

The *shelter and protection of a free government*, also demand awakened and grateful energies. Since its welfare is involved in the virtue and intelligence of its subjects, the character and habits of every

member of its great family, are of importance. I imagine that I hear from the lips of some of the young and sprightly of my sex, the inquiry, "why need we concern ourselves in the affairs of politicians? what share have we in the destinies of our country?" The same share that the rill has in the rivulet, and the rivulet in the sea. Should every little shaded streamlet tarry at its fountain head, where would be the river, that dispenses fertility,—the ocean, bearing commerce and wealth upon its never resting tide. Woman possesses an agency which the ancient republics never discovered. The young fountains of the mind are given in charge to her. She can tinge them with sweetness or bitterness, ere they have chosen the channels where to flow, or learned to murmur their story to the time-worn pebbles. Greece, that disciple and worshipper of wisdom, neglected to appreciate the value of the feebler sex, or to believe that they who had the moulding of the whole mass of mind in its first formation, might help to infuse a principle of permanence into national existence. Rome, in her wolf-nursed greatness, in her "fierce democracy," in the corruption of her imperial purple, despised the

moral strength that lay hidden under physical weakness. But our country has conceded every thing; the blessings of education, the equality of companionship, the luxury of benevolence, the confidence of a culturer's office to those young buds of being, in whom is her wealth and her hope. What does she require of our sex, in return for these courtesies? Has she not a right to expect that we give our hands to every cause of peace and truth,—that we nurse the plants of temperance and purity,—that we frown on every inroad of disorder and vice,—that we labor in all places where our lot may be cast, as gentle teachers of wisdom and charity, and that we hold ourselves, in domestic privacy, the guardians of those principles which the sage defends in the halls of legislation, and the priest of Jehovah upon the walls of Zion?

Gratitude for the religion of Jesus Christ, should inspire an unwavering zeal. Beside the high hope of salvation, which we share in common with all who embrace the Gospel, our obligations to it, as a sex, are peculiar and deep. It has broken down the vassalage which was enforced even in the most polished heathen climes. Its humility hath persuaded men to

give honor to "the weaker vessel." Her depressed condition in classic Greece, is familiar to all who read the pages of history. Tho' her epic poet portrayed in radiant colors, an Andromache and a Penelope, yet they were but the imagery of fiction, and the situation of woman in real life was scarcely a grade above that of a slave. Even in Athens, the "eye of Greece," Thucydides, her most profound and faithful historian, asserts, "that the best woman is she of whom the least can be said, either in the way of good or harm." Her degradation into a cypher, accords with their estimation of her powers, and the place they intended her to fill in creation. The brutality with which she is still treated in pagan lands, and the miseries which make her life a burden cause her to deplore the birth of a female infant, with the same unnatural grief that the ancient Transi cherished, who according to Herodotus, "assembled to weep when a child entered the world, on account of the evils of that existence into which he was ushered; while they celebrated funerals with joy, because the deceased was released from all human calamities." That policy, which, for ages, regarded women as toys of fancy for a mo-

ment, and then slaves forever, "hewers of wood, and drawers of water," so vile as to be shut from the consecrated temple on earth, and so devoid of soul as to be incapable of an entrance into Heaven, is "abolished by Him, who hath made both one, and broken down the middle wall of partition between us." Double cause, then, hath woman to be faithful to her Master; to be always longest at his cross and earliest at his sepulchre. Let us earnestly strive not to live altogether "to ourselves, but unto him who hath called us to glory and virtue."

By the *shortness of life*, we are also admonished to perpetual industry. Where are those with whom we took sweet counsel, who walked hand in hand with us, beneath the sunbeams of youth's cloudless morning? The haunts of the summer ramble, the fire-side seats of winter's communion, reply, *they are not with us*. The grave answers the question, "*they are with me*." Doth it not also add in a hoarse, and hollow murmur, "*thou also, shall be with me?*" How often, in the registers of mortality, do we see the date of the early smitten. How often is the fair hand, that had plucked only life's opening flowers, withdrawn

from the grasp of love, and stretched out in immovable coldness. How often is the unfrosted head laid down on a mouldering pillow, to await the resurrection. The firmest hold on time, is like the frail rooting of the flower of grass. The longest life has been likened by those who review it, to a dream, fleeting and indistinct. The present moment is all of which we have assurance. Let us mark it with the diligence of a deeply felt responsibility. Let us learn from the tomb its oft repeated, yet too unheeded lesson: "what thine hand findeth to do, do it with thy might;" for with me, to whom thou art hastening, is "neither wisdom, nor knowledge, nor device."

The assurance that this is a *state of probation*, should give vigor to virtue and solemnity to truth. Every hour assumes a fearful responsibility when we view it as the culturer of an immortal harvest. Time is the seed-planter of Eternity, and every winged moment does his work and will have its wages. Here we are but in the childhood of our existence. This was deeply realized by that great philosopher to whom the universe unfolded its mysterious laws, and light, that most subtle element revealed its mechanism, who held communion with Nature in her majesty, as the

prophet walked on Sinai with his God. In the wisdom of his heaven-taught humility, he said, that his whole life seemed but as the play of children, among the sands and bubbles of the sea-shore. The belief that "He who knoweth our frame," keepeth us here in his fatherly school, that its discipline may qualify us to become students with angels, should incite us not only to discharge duty, but to sustain adverse appointments with an unshrinking spirit. We should ever remember that this is our trial state, and that trials, more powerfully than pleasures ripen the fruits of righteousness. "The good things which belong to prosperity may be *wished*, but the good things that belong to adversity are to be *admired*," said Seneca: or to use the clearer language of Bacon, that greater than Seneca, "the virtue of prosperity is temperance, but the virtue of adversity is fortitude, and the last is the more sublime attainment." Let us strive to pass calmly under the storm, or to tread the miry path without pollution, because we are travellers to our Father's house, where nothing can enter that defileth. This world was evidently not intended for a state, where the immortal mind

could receive full gratification. To resist evil, to fulfil obligation, to partake cheerfully of finite good, yet to feel its disproportion to our own boundless desires, to submit to the refiner's process in the furnace of affliction, and ardently to seek fitness for an ethereal home, is perceived to be our principal business and highest wisdom. Elevated by such contemplations, sufferings and labors will seem light. Calumny and injustice will be borne with patience, for the praise or dishonor of men is as an air bubble to those who are bound to an unerring tribunal, where "every thought is made manifest."

The sports and griefs of a child, seem to manhood as folly. Yet amid these sports and sorrows, he is cherishing the tempers which are to go with him through life, and form its happiness, or woe. So, the pursuits of men, their love of variety, their eagerness for wealth, their bloody strife after honor, their agony when these rainbow promises fade, are folly to the eye of angels. Yet by the agency of such pursuits, and disappointments, are those dispositions confirmed, which either fit to dwell with angels, or exclude from their society forever.

The objects that now agitate or delight us, must soon perish. But the habits of mind which they generate, the affections which they mature, are eternal. They go with us over the "swelling of Jordan," when, of all the riches which we have gathered, we can carry nothing away. The harmony of soul, which prepares for intercourse with "just men made perfect," the love of holiness, the spirit of praise, which constitute the temper and the bliss of Heaven, must be commenced below; so that not the *scenes* through which we pass but the *impressions which those scenes make on the soul*, are to be desired, or deprecated. Ah! who is sufficiently aware of the importance of this brief existence? Who is that "faithful and wise steward," whom his Lord, coming even at midnight, shall find prepared?

The *consciousness of immortality*, is both a prompting and sustaining motive of immense influence. To do this, or to avoid that,—not from considerations of personal interest, but because *we are to live forever*, is worthy of a being, marked out by his Creator, for a

"Sky-born, sky-guided, sky-returning race."

We are too prone to be absorbed, either by the things of this life, or by gloomy views of its termination, pressed on us by the departure of some endeared relative or friend. We busy ourselves more with the part which dieth, than with that which is immortal. Sometimes we array Death with a transforming power, or trust that the diseases which are his heralds, may bring a repentance able to atone for the errors and omissions of many years.

That *this is our only state of probation*, should give vigor to effort, and solemnity to duty. Death often steals unawares upon his victim, leaving no time for sigh or prayer. His office is to sunder the spirit from the clay, not to reform it, or prepare it for heaven. He takes the soul as he finds it. It is *life* which seals its credentials, for the bliss or woe of eternity. We are accustomed to anticipate the ministry of death with fear. I would say to you, rather *fear life*; for according to the character of that life, will death be to you either the king of terrors, or the herald of unspeakable joy.

“Death hath no dread, but what frail life imparts.”

We think too much of the *dark gate*, through

which we pass into the eternal temple, and too little of the *pilgrimage* by which our mansion in that temple is determined. Earthly prosperity should be estimated by its influence on the soul. What we here term adversities, may in reality be blessings. When we cast off these vestments of clay, perhaps they may come in beautiful garments, to welcome us to everlasting habitations. Here, we spoke of them as evil messengers; in the court of Heaven, we may perchance recognize them, as "angels sent on errands of love."

By the combined influence therefore of intellectual, moral and religious obligation, by the unresting voice of Time, Judgment and Eternity, we are impelled to diligence, perseverance and zeal in duty, urged to "forget the things that are behind, and reach forward toward those that are before, and press onward to the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God, in Christ Jesus our Lord."

And now, my daughters, farewell! In pursuing with you, objects of tender and high concern, my heart has been drawn towards you, with something of a mother's love. The hand that traces these lines, will soon moulder in dust, and the eye that peruses them, how-

ever radiant with hope, or brilliant in beauty, must wear the seal of clay. Though we never meet in the flesh, yet at that day when the "dead, small and great, shall stand before God," may it be found that we have so communed in spirit, as to aid in the blessed pilgrimage to "glory,—honor,—immortality,—eternal life."

